



SCHOOLS FOR SNOBBERY

What is wrong with private schools by a leading client: Polly Toynbee
Page 15

WILL VICTOR MELDREW GET BOTH FEET IN THE GRAVE?

Don't miss your 40-page Christmas TV and entertainment guide on Friday



£10,000 OF HI FI, VCRs AND MORE TO BE WON

See page 10 for token

Shock defeat for Tories in fishing vote

Government loses by two votes

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

Tory divisions over Europe were once again brutally exposed last night when the Government suffered the humiliation of a Commons defeat by 299-297 votes over fishery quotas.

The vote is a severe embarrassment for the Prime Minister, John Major, at a time when he had hoped to have united his party at the beginning of the long haul towards a general election in 1996 or 1997.

The Government defeat by the water-thin majority came despite a strongly worded appeal by Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, to the Tory rebels not to "compromise" by lining up with Labour against the Government.

Although the vote is unlikely to make any lasting impact on government policy, Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture, said last night he would "give due weight" to the Commons vote in negotiating fishing cuts ordered by the EU.

The decision came after an acrimonious debate over European Commission proposals - to be discussed by European fishing ministers in Brussels tomorrow - which would mean significant cuts in fishing quotas next year.

In a bid to stave off the rebellion, Tony Baldry, the fisheries minister, last night announced the restoration of £4m a year in grants to fishing ports and Spanish agreement to a £100,000 compensation payment to British fishermen for Spanish incursions into British waters.

Bitter divisions between pro-Europeans and Eurosceptics in the party were exposed after John Townend, the Thatcherite

MP for Bridlington, said the Government could not be blamed for the betrayal of the fishing industry by Sir Edward Heath. Sir Edward retorted that Mr Townend should be "ashamed" of "degrading" himself by his abusive remarks.

Last night's vote came after the Government had faced opposition within its own ranks to proposed fishery quotas from two distinct sections of the party: MPs with coastal constituencies seriously perturbed



Sir Edward Heath: 'betrayed fishing industry'

at new quotas proposed by the commission, and Eurosceptics committed to seeking withdrawal from the European Common Fisheries Policy.

Proposed new cuts in quotas will mean a 30 per cent reduction in herring, mackerel, and plaice catches. Although cod, haddock and saithe quotas will remain stable, the Government has acknowledged there will be a "significant cut" in North Sea whiting catches.

The Government had already underlined how keen it had been to avoid a defeat - by announcing a reprieve of £12m

in harbour, marketing and processing grants over three years which had been cut as a result of the most recent public spending round. Mr Forsyth, who has special credibility with the Eurosceptics, was put up to open the debate instead of Douglas Hogg, the more pro-European Agriculture Minister.

Both the main parties had earlier made strenuous efforts to maximise their votes - bringing back MPs from abroad and appealing to ill MPs to come to the House of Commons where they were capable of voting. Labour MPs including Roland Boyes, who is unwell, and John Fraser, who has been in traction as a result of a car crash, were both brought into vote.

The Liberal Democrats, both the two nationalist parties, the SDLP and the Democratic Unionist Party - whose leader, Ian Paisley, launched an impassioned attack on the impact on the EU of the fishery industry - all voted against the Government. The Ulster Unionists, whose leader, David Trimble, met John Major yesterday to discuss the northern Ireland peace process, left it until late in the day to decide how to vote.

There were signs that the mood among the most entrenched Eurosceptics had hardened over the last 24 hours with some planning to use the vote partly as a means of demonstrating their anxiety at the confirmation of a timetable and name for the single currency at the Madrid summit. Despite Britain having the right to opt-out from the single currency, Eurosceptics have registered dismay at Mr Major's refusal to rule out British membership of monetary union in the next Parliament.

Ashby faces ruin after libel case



David Ashby MP yesterday after failing in his suit against the Sunday Times

Photograph: Geraint Lewis

REBECCA FOWLER
and PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES

David Ashby, the Tory MP, faces financial and personal ruin after a jury in effect branded him "a liar, a hypocrite and a homosexual" by finding against him in his libel case against the *Sunday Times* and Andrew Neil, its former editor.

Mr Ashby, 55, sobbed when the jury delivered their majority verdict at the High Court, following five hours of deliberation. He faces a future which could see the end of his political career, the division of his family and potential bankruptcy, with legal costs of up to £500,000.

During the three-week trial, Mr Ashby had poured out the most intimate details of his private life, lambasted his estranged wife Silvana Ashby, 53, who had repeatedly alleged he was homosexual, and persuaded Alexandra, 27, their daughter, to give evidence against her mother.

In a dramatic exchange after the jury delivered its verdict, Mrs Ashby walked over to her distraught husband at the front of the courtroom, placed an arm around him and reached down to kiss him. "Leave me," he wept, pushing her away through his tears.

Afterwards Mrs Ashby issued a statement. "It gives me no pleasure to see my husband lose an expensive libel action, I hope it will not have a terri-

Inside

How the case ended in tears...
Caught in a time warp...
Silvana Ashby's recipe for marital bliss...
Section Two

ble effect on him. On numerous occasions I asked him to think twice before continuing with the litigation... the last thing I wanted was to involve Alex, our daughter."

Mrs Ashby, a Roman Catholic, said she was unsure if she and her husband would divorce. She plans to spend Christmas with Alexandra, who works as a stockbroker in Italy, and was unaware of Mr Ashby's plans.

Mr Ashby, MP for Leicestershire North West since 1983, sued the *Sunday Times* over allegations he was a homosexual who had deceitfully presented himself as a married family man and supported the Tory Back to Basics campaign which upheld traditional family values.

Although the newspaper admitted it was wrong to suggest Mr Ashby had shared a bed with a man on holiday in Goa, India, it maintained he was a homosexual. He was accused of having an affair with Dr Claran Kilduff, 32, who was his neighbour after he separated from his wife in 1993.

The newspaper welcomed the jury's decision yesterday, but said the trial had turned into a "ghastly family tragedy", and indicated executives would consider being lenient in calling on Mr Ashby to pay costs. The newspaper is understood to have paid a nominal fee of less than £1,000 into court for damages to Mr Ashby.

Television tyranny, page 24
Leading article, page 14

Ministers knew about jail squalor months ago

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Ministers were warned months ago about appalling conditions in Holloway jail but failed to halt the decline, which prompted the unprecedented walk-out by the Chief Inspector of Prisons.

The Board of Visitors at Britain's biggest women prison wrote earlier this year, warning of staff shortages, squalor, inmates locked in their cells for up to 23 hours a day and inhumane treatment. Their message was said to have been repaid to Ann Widdecombe, the Prisons Minister, when she visited the jail in July.

Yesterday it was alleged one pregnant prisoner had been shackled to a male officer while undergoing an anti-natal ex-

amination, as part of the "over-zealous security" regime that was identified by the Chief Inspector before he halted the inspection and demanded emergency action.

Holloway sources said General Sir David Ramsbottom was horrified by the infestation of rats, cockroaches and lice in the jail and by parcels of faeces and food thrown from windows and left to rot. Sir David, who only took up the post earlier this month, was said to have been shocked also by the lack of visible care for the large numbers of vulnerable women among the 500 strong population - the mentally ill, the abused and foreign nationals.

Yesterday 16 extra staff were drafted in to help with a crisis in staffing, which has led to what

has been described as, on occasion, a "virtual lock-down". Janet King, the governor, has apparently requested 66 extra staff. Staff were said to be exhausted, were owed 4,000 hours off in lieu of extra work, and were dogged by ill-health.

It was suggested the Inspector had already identified management failings, which may undermine the governor's role.

Yesterday Richard Tilt, acting director general, said there was "no excuse" for filthy conditions. There are also concerns at the over-emphasis on security, introduced by the governor after the Farquhar and White-moor escapes. The Learmont inquiry itself questioned the degree of security under which women were being held, recommending accommodation

Shocking sight, Page 2



Rugby's £87m deal gives Murdoch transfer veto

DAVE HADFIELD

Rupert Murdoch's influence over British sport has assumed a new and threatening shape with the revelation that leading players in rugby league's Super League - which kicks off next March - will not be able to change clubs without the permission of News Corporation.

A copy of the "loyalty" agreement signed by dozens of Britain's top players in preparation for the launch of the Super League reveals that Mr Murdoch's News Corporation, which has pumped £87m into the game here, has a veto over who goes where.

Sky Television already tailors kick-off times and fixture dates in Premiership football to its needs. But the extent of Mr

Murdoch's control of Britain's second-best supported team game has emerged as much greater. Already the sport, which celebrated its centenary this year, has been switched to a summer season, and there are fears that plans to merge clubs, abandoned in the face of supporters' protests earlier this year, may be revived.

It is clear the organisation will be able to control players' movements. The second clause of the contract, which has come into the hands of the *Independent*, reads: "You will not modify, amend or terminate your contract with the club or waive any of its provisions without News' prior written consent."

This, as some clubs have discovered when they have come to negotiate transfers, gives the

organisation the power to block a move of which it disapproves - possibly because it threatens to make a strong club even stronger, or because it removes a draw-card player from a team heavily dependent on him.

When players, including virtually the whole first-team squad at the champion club Wigan and a scattering elsewhere, signed the contracts earlier this year they were thought to be agreeing only not to join the Australian Rugby League, which is still locked in conflict with Mr Murdoch for control of the game in the Southern hemisphere. In fact, the clause goes much further, giving News International a degree of control over the game's internal market.

Television tyranny, page 24
Leading article, page 14

section ONE

BUSINESS 16-20 COMMENT 14.15 CROSSWORD 24 GAZETTE 12
LAW REPORT 12 LEADING ARTICLES 14 LETTERS 14 NEWS 2-11
OBITUARIES 12 SHARES 19 SPORT 21-24 UNIT TRUSTS 20

section TWO

ARTS 9-13 BRIDGET JONES 6 CHESS 22 CROSSWORD 22 FEEDBACK 22
FINANCE 18.19 LAW 14-17 LIFE 6-8 LISTINGS 20.21 REVIEWS 9
TELEVISION & RADIO 23.24 THEATRE 12.13 WEATHER 21



Don't forget there's still time to send flowers.



WE'RE ACCEPTING ORDERS RIGHT UP TO 11AM ON 23RD DECEMBER FOR SAME DAY DELIVERY TO ORDER.

FREECALL INTERFLORA 24 HRS ON 0500 43 43 43.

Delivered by hand. Straight to the heart.

Interflora

هكذا من الأصل

news

Scandal of Holloway: Prisons' inspectorate shocked by vermin, filth and inmates afflicted with head lice

Sickening sight of rat-infested jail



Faces of Holloway: Inside Britain's largest women's prison and (right) Kathleen Mackay, 27, a pregnant inmate who was taken from the jail to hospital when she feared that her labour pains had started. She remained manacled even while she played with her baby nephew

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

One of the most sickening images of Holloway jail for the new Chief Inspector of Prisons was watching a rat, which was so huge it could not fit into one of the traps set to catch the vermin.

He was appalled that women inmates had headlice but were unable to get the medicated shampoo needed to rid them on the problem.

He was shocked at the parcels of faeces, food and used tampons rotting in court-wards outside cell windows - hurled there by prisoners with no litter bins and no access to working toilets.

But squalor was only one aspect of life in Britain's largest women's jail that prompted General Sir David Ramsbotham

to pull his 11-strong inspection team out of the Victorian jail in protest at the conditions and prompting a major political row.

He was, according to sources at the prison, ashamed at the lack of care and treatment of many of the jail's vulnerable prisoners - the mentally ill, the abused, foreign nationals and pregnant women. He is also to be told of allegations that one pregnant woman was shackled to a male prison warder, while having anti-natal examinations. Another was said to have been exposed to a male officer while showering.

Holloway uses "closet chains" - tied round the ankles but of sufficient length to pass under a lavatory door, supposedly to afford women a degree of dignity. Yesterday one work-

er in the jail said that no women were allowed out of the jail, even on hospital visits, without being chained - no matter how petty the crime. "Overzealous security" was one of the major shortfalls the 11 inspectors identified in their four days in the jail, before Sir David pulled them out.

One woman who was released from Holloway earlier this year, but who asked not to be named for legal reasons said: "You would not believe what was happening to women in there."

Locked in their cells for hours on end - most were "banged up from 3.30 in the afternoon until the next morning" - many were "cutting up" or "harming themselves".

There have been two suicides in the jail in the past six months.

The 38-year-old woman said that no glass was allowed into the jail, so women were mutilating themselves on nails pulled out of walls or even on sharp hard lumps of paint on radiators and were also gouging their faces or scratching their arms and legs.

"They are given pills to make them sleep and others to control them in the day." There were often fights and bullying.

She herself said that she had written to the Home Office on her release complaining of conditions in the jail.

Women can spend up to 23 hours a day locked in their cells. Education, work and out of cell association and activities have been severely cut back.

Some of the jail's problems - as identified by Anne Widdi-

come, the Prison Minister - are due to a massive staff shortage. And those officers who are working in the jail are, according to Chris Tchaikovsky, director of Women in Prison, literally dropping on their feet, through stress and over-work.

They are owed 4,000 hours time off in lieu, which they cannot take and on any one day up to 30 will be off sick.

But critics say poor management at all levels and the concentration of unnecessary security has exacerbated the problem. One prison officer said: "I did not join the service to lock women in their cells all day."

But the full effects of the chaos in Holloway goes much further, adding considerably to the misery and stress of inmates.

Lack of staff means prisoner get to their visits late, reducing essential and vital time with their families. Visits with lawyers have been similarly affected, leaving women with the belief that they are being denied justice.

Women are not receiving clothes parcels and reduced canteen and welfare services. "We have women here with literally no underwear, deportees with no clothes" said one welfare worker at the jail.

One former inmate, Karen Stott, a 36 year old mother, released from Holloway last month, said: "It's very tense in there, there's a lot of people with mental problems who are not getting the right help, they just put them on medication."

"It's filthy, it's not cleaned

property, there's nothing for the women to do, there's not even any books to pick up and read, it's nearly all 24-hour lock up all the time."

Emma Humphries, recently freed from Holloway by the Court of Appeal after her conviction for killing her violent partner was reduced to manslaughter, said: "Conditions were appalling particularly if you were mentally or physically ill. You were left all day with very little care or attention, locked in your cell and treated like animals."

She said with some notable exceptions man staff treated prisoners as "sub-human".

The welfare worker said: "So many of these problems are so easily preventable and, I think it was that, which really got to the prison inspectors."

IN BRIEF

Man in court on charity theft charge

A former adviser to the Salvation Army appeared in court yesterday charged with stealing £853,000 from the charity.

Stuart Christopher Ford, 44, of Stechford, Birmingham, faced 23 charges of theft from the client account of Edge and Ellison, a Birmingham firm of solicitors, in 1992.

Mr Ford had been involved in an investment programme for the charity. The prosecution alleges he used Salvation Army money to clear personal debts. He was granted conditional bail to reappear by Bow Street magistrates.

Meningitis 'freak'

Doctors are trying to establish how the parents of a seven-week-old baby who died from meningitis have also become infected in a case so rare it was called "like being struck by lightning". The unidentified couple were said to be "improving" in Newcastle General hospital.

A&E units 'in crisis'

Some hospitals are facing an unprecedented crisis because of soaring emergency admissions, says a report published by the National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts (NAHAT) and the British Association of Medical Managers (BAMM). Emergency admissions rose in England by 13 per cent in the four years to mid-1994, with a similar trend in Scotland, with many hospitals having to juggle beds, cancel operations even close emergency admissions for days to cope.

£10m drugs haul

Five people were being questioned after drugs worth £10m, including a consignment of ecstasy tablets, were seized at Burtonwood service station on the M62 in Cheshire following a six-month operation by police and customs. Three men were arrested at the scene, one at Manchester airport another in Liverpool.

Road grants cut

The amount of grant from the Department of Transport to local authorities for road and other transport schemes has been reduced by 13 per cent for 1995/6. Local authorities will now receive £960m compared with £1,100m last year which will result in many local road schemes having to be shelved.

Embryo reprieve

Scores of frozen embryos due to be destroyed in July next year have been reprieved following a review by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority of current practice. New regulations will mean that embryos can now be stored for 10 years or longer, in exceptional circumstances, rather than the current five year limit.

Greenwich review

An advisory body has been set up by the Government to review proposals for the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, south-east London, and narrow the contestants to a short-list.

Death plunge

Police in Tokyo launched an inquiry into the apparent suicide of a British businessman who fell to his death from an office window before a meeting. Geoffrey Till, 37, of Witney, Oxfordshire, sales chief of Unipart Industries, died instantly.

Slough train to China

Printed timetables available at Reading railway station are advertising an 8.25am Sunday service via Slough, in Berkshire, to Outer Mongolia. Great Western Trains blamed a clerical error.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria	£5.40	Italy	£5.00
Belgium	£5.40	Japan	£4.50
Canada	£6.00	Malta	£3.25
Czech Rep.	£5.40	Norway	£4.25
Denmark	£5.40	Poland	£4.25
France	£5.40	Spain	£4.25
Germany	£5.40	Sweden	£4.25
Greece	£5.40	Switzerland	£4.25
Luxembourg	£5.40	USA	£3.00

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS

By mail, 13 weeks Europe £120.75, Zone 1 (incl. air mail) £135.75, Zone 2 (incl. air mail) £150.75, Zone 3 (incl. air mail) £165.75, Zone 4 (incl. air mail) £180.75, Zone 5 (incl. air mail) £195.75, Zone 6 (incl. air mail) £210.75, Zone 7 (incl. air mail) £225.75, Zone 8 (incl. air mail) £240.75, Zone 9 (incl. air mail) £255.75, Zone 10 (incl. air mail) £270.75, Zone 11 (incl. air mail) £285.75, Zone 12 (incl. air mail) £300.75, Zone 13 (incl. air mail) £315.75, Zone 14 (incl. air mail) £330.75, Zone 15 (incl. air mail) £345.75, Zone 16 (incl. air mail) £360.75, Zone 17 (incl. air mail) £375.75, Zone 18 (incl. air mail) £390.75, Zone 19 (incl. air mail) £405.75, Zone 20 (incl. air mail) £420.75, Zone 21 (incl. air mail) £435.75, Zone 22 (incl. air mail) £450.75, Zone 23 (incl. air mail) £465.75, Zone 24 (incl. air mail) £480.75, Zone 25 (incl. air mail) £495.75, Zone 26 (incl. air mail) £510.75, Zone 27 (incl. air mail) £525.75, Zone 28 (incl. air mail) £540.75, Zone 29 (incl. air mail) £555.75, Zone 30 (incl. air mail) £570.75, Zone 31 (incl. air mail) £585.75, Zone 32 (incl. air mail) £600.75, Zone 33 (incl. air mail) £615.75, Zone 34 (incl. air mail) £630.75, Zone 35 (incl. air mail) £645.75, Zone 36 (incl. air mail) £660.75, Zone 37 (incl. air mail) £675.75, Zone 38 (incl. air mail) £690.75, Zone 39 (incl. air mail) £705.75, Zone 40 (incl. air mail) £720.75, Zone 41 (incl. air mail) £735.75, Zone 42 (incl. air mail) £750.75, Zone 43 (incl. air mail) £765.75, Zone 44 (incl. air mail) £780.75, Zone 45 (incl. air mail) £795.75, Zone 46 (incl. air mail) £810.75, Zone 47 (incl. air mail) £825.75, Zone 48 (incl. air mail) £840.75, Zone 49 (incl. air mail) £855.75, Zone 50 (incl. air mail) £870.75, Zone 51 (incl. air mail) £885.75, Zone 52 (incl. air mail) £900.75, Zone 53 (incl. air mail) £915.75, Zone 54 (incl. air mail) £930.75, Zone 55 (incl. air mail) £945.75, Zone 56 (incl. air mail) £960.75, Zone 57 (incl. air mail) £975.75, Zone 58 (incl. air mail) £990.75, Zone 59 (incl. air mail) £1005.75, Zone 60 (incl. air mail) £1020.75, Zone 61 (incl. air mail) £1035.75, Zone 62 (incl. air mail) £1050.75, Zone 63 (incl. air mail) £1065.75, Zone 64 (incl. air mail) £1080.75, Zone 65 (incl. air mail) £1095.75, Zone 66 (incl. air mail) £1110.75, Zone 67 (incl. air mail) £1125.75, Zone 68 (incl. air mail) £1140.75, Zone 69 (incl. air mail) £1155.75, Zone 70 (incl. air mail) £1170.75, Zone 71 (incl. air mail) £1185.75, Zone 72 (incl. air mail) £1200.75, Zone 73 (incl. air mail) £1215.75, Zone 74 (incl. air mail) £1230.75, Zone 75 (incl. air mail) £1245.75, Zone 76 (incl. air mail) £1260.75, Zone 77 (incl. air mail) £1275.75, Zone 78 (incl. air mail) £1290.75, Zone 79 (incl. air mail) £1305.75, Zone 80 (incl. air mail) £1320.75, Zone 81 (incl. air mail) £1335.75, Zone 82 (incl. air mail) £1350.75, Zone 83 (incl. air mail) £1365.75, Zone 84 (incl. air mail) £1380.75, Zone 85 (incl. air mail) £1395.75, Zone 86 (incl. air mail) £1410.75, Zone 87 (incl. air mail) £1425.75, Zone 88 (incl. air mail) £1440.75, Zone 89 (incl. air mail) £1455.75, Zone 90 (incl. air mail) £1470.75, Zone 91 (incl. air mail) £1485.75, Zone 92 (incl. air mail) £1500.75, Zone 93 (incl. air mail) £1515.75, Zone 94 (incl. air mail) £1530.75, Zone 95 (incl. air mail) £1545.75, Zone 96 (incl. air mail) £1560.75, Zone 97 (incl. air mail) £1575.75, Zone 98 (incl. air mail) £1590.75, Zone 99 (incl. air mail) £1605.75, Zone 100 (incl. air mail) £1620.75, Zone 101 (incl. air mail) £1635.75, Zone 102 (incl. air mail) £1650.75, Zone 103 (incl. air mail) £1665.75, Zone 104 (incl. air mail) £1680.75, Zone 105 (incl. air mail) £1695.75, Zone 106 (incl. air mail) £1710.75, Zone 107 (incl. air mail) £1725.75, Zone 108 (incl. air mail) £1740.75, Zone 109 (incl. air mail) £1755.75, Zone 110 (incl. air mail) £1770.75, Zone 111 (incl. air mail) £1785.75, Zone 112 (incl. air mail) £1800.75, Zone 113 (incl. air mail) £1815.75, Zone 114 (incl. air mail) £1830.75, Zone 115 (incl. air mail) £1845.75, Zone 116 (incl. air mail) £1860.75, Zone 117 (incl. air mail) £1875.75, Zone 118 (incl. air mail) £1890.75, Zone 119 (incl. air mail) £1905.75, Zone 120 (incl. air mail) £1920.75, Zone 121 (incl. air mail) £1935.75, Zone 122 (incl. air mail) £1950.75, Zone 123 (incl. air mail) £1965.75, Zone 124 (incl. air mail) £1980.75, Zone 125 (incl. air mail) £1995.75, Zone 126 (incl. air mail) £2010.75, Zone 127 (incl. air mail) £2025.75, Zone 128 (incl. air mail) £2040.75, Zone 129 (incl. air mail) £2055.75, Zone 130 (incl. air mail) £2070.75, Zone 131 (incl. air mail) £2085.75, Zone 132 (incl. air mail) £2100.75, Zone 133 (incl. air mail) £2115.75, Zone 134 (incl. air mail) £2130.75, Zone 135 (incl. air mail) £2145.75, Zone 136 (incl. air mail) £2160.75, Zone 137 (incl. air mail) £2175.75, Zone 138 (incl. air mail) £2190.75, Zone 139 (incl. air mail) £2205.75, Zone 140 (incl. air mail) £2220.75, Zone 141 (incl. air mail) £2235.75, Zone 142 (incl. air mail) £2250.75, Zone 143 (incl. air mail) £2265.75, Zone 144 (incl. air mail) £2280.75, Zone 145 (incl. air mail) £2295.75, Zone 146 (incl. air mail) £2310.75, Zone 147 (incl. air mail) £2325.75, Zone 148 (incl. air mail) £2340.75, Zone 149 (incl. air mail) £2355.75, Zone 150 (incl. air mail) £2370.75, Zone 151 (incl. air mail) £2385.75, Zone 152 (incl. air mail) £2400.75, Zone 153 (incl. air mail) £2415.75, Zone 154 (incl. air mail) £2430.75, Zone 155 (incl. air mail) £2445.75, Zone 156 (incl. air mail) £2460.75, Zone 157 (incl. air mail) £2475.75, Zone 158 (incl. air mail) £2490.75, Zone 159 (incl. air mail) £2505.75, Zone 160 (incl. air mail) £2520.75, Zone 161 (incl. air mail) £2535.75, Zone 162 (incl. air mail) £2550.75, Zone 163 (incl. air mail) £2565.75, Zone 164 (incl. air mail) £2580.75, Zone 165 (incl. air mail) £2595.75, Zone 166 (incl. air mail) £2610.75, Zone 167 (incl. air mail) £2625.75, Zone 168 (incl. air mail) £2640.75, Zone 169 (incl. air mail) £2655.75, Zone 170 (incl. air mail) £2670.75, Zone 171 (incl. air mail) £2685.75, Zone 172 (incl. air mail) £2700.75, Zone 173 (incl. air mail) £2715.75, Zone 174 (incl. air mail) £2730.75, Zone 175 (incl. air mail) £2745.75, Zone 176 (incl. air mail) £2760.75, Zone 177 (incl. air mail) £2775.75, Zone 178 (incl. air mail) £2790.75, Zone 179 (incl. air mail) £2805.75, Zone 180 (incl. air mail) £2820.75, Zone 181 (incl. air mail) £2835.75, Zone 182 (incl. air mail) £2850.75, Zone 183 (incl. air mail) £2865.75, Zone 184 (incl. air mail) £2880.75, Zone 185 (incl. air mail) £2895.75, Zone 186 (incl. air mail) £2910.75, Zone 187 (incl. air mail) £2925.75, Zone 188 (incl. air mail) £2940.75, Zone 189 (incl. air mail) £2955.75, Zone 190 (incl. air mail) £2970.75, Zone 191 (incl. air mail) £2985.75, Zone 192 (incl. air mail) £3000.75, Zone 193 (incl. air mail) £3015.75, Zone 194 (incl. air mail) £3030.75, Zone 195 (incl. air mail) £3045.75, Zone 196 (incl. air mail) £3060.75, Zone 197 (incl. air mail) £3075.75, Zone 198 (incl. air mail) £3090.75, Zone 199 (incl. air mail) £3105.75, Zone 200 (incl. air mail) £3120.75, Zone 201 (incl. air mail) £3135.75, Zone 202 (incl. air mail) £3150.75, Zone 203 (incl. air mail) £3165.75, Zone 204 (incl. air mail) £3180.75, Zone 205 (incl. air mail) £3195.75, Zone 206 (incl. air mail) £3210.75, Zone 207 (incl. air mail) £3225.75, Zone 208 (incl. air mail) £3240.75, Zone 209 (incl. air mail) £3255.75, Zone 210 (incl. air mail) £3270.75, Zone 211 (incl. air mail) £3285.75, Zone 212 (incl. air mail) £3300.75, Zone 213 (incl. air mail) £3315.75, Zone 214 (incl. air mail) £3330.75, Zone 215 (incl. air mail) £3345.75, Zone 216 (incl. air mail) £3360.75, Zone 217 (incl. air mail) £3375.75, Zone 218 (incl. air mail) £3390.75, Zone 219 (incl. air mail) £3405.75, Zone 220 (incl. air mail) £3420.75, Zone 221 (incl. air mail) £3435.75, Zone 222 (incl. air mail) £3450.75, Zone 223 (incl. air mail) £3465.75, Zone 224 (incl. air mail) £3480.75, Zone 225 (incl. air mail) £3495.75, Zone 226 (incl. air mail) £3510.75, Zone 227 (incl. air mail) £3525.75, Zone 228 (incl. air mail) £3540.75, Zone 229 (incl. air mail) £3555.75, Zone 230 (incl. air mail) £3570.75, Zone 231 (incl. air mail) £3585.75, Zone 232 (incl. air mail) £3600.75, Zone 233 (incl. air mail) £3615.75, Zone 234 (incl. air mail) £3630.75, Zone 235 (incl. air mail) £3645.75, Zone 236 (incl. air mail) £3660.75, Zone 237 (incl. air mail) £3675.75, Zone 238 (incl. air mail) £3690.75, Zone 239 (incl. air mail) £3705.75, Zone 240 (incl. air mail) £3720.75, Zone 241 (incl. air mail) £3735.75, Zone 242 (incl. air mail) £3750.75, Zone 243 (incl. air mail) £3765.75, Zone 244 (incl. air mail) £3780.75, Zone 245 (incl. air mail) £3795.75, Zone 246 (incl. air mail) £3810.75, Zone 247 (incl. air mail) £3825.75, Zone 248 (incl. air mail) £3840.75, Zone 249 (incl. air mail) £3855.75, Zone 250 (incl. air mail) £3870.75, Zone 251 (incl. air mail) £3885.75, Zone 252 (incl. air mail) £3900.75, Zone 253 (incl. air mail) £3915.75, Zone 254 (incl. air mail) £3930.75, Zone 255 (incl. air mail) £3945.75, Zone 256 (incl. air mail) £3960.75, Zone 257 (incl. air mail) £3975.75, Zone 258 (incl. air mail) £3990.75, Zone 259 (incl. air mail) £4005.75, Zone 260 (incl. air mail) £4020.75, Zone 261 (incl. air mail) £4035.75, Zone 262 (incl. air mail) £4050.75, Zone 263 (incl. air mail) £4065.75, Zone 264 (incl. air mail) £4080.75, Zone 265 (incl. air mail) £4095.75, Zone 266 (incl. air mail) £4110.75, Zone 267 (incl. air mail) £4125.75, Zone 268 (incl. air mail) £4140.75, Zone 269 (incl. air mail) £4155.75, Zone 270 (incl. air mail) £4170.75, Zone 271 (incl. air mail) £4185.75, Zone 272 (incl. air mail) £4200.75, Zone 273 (incl. air mail) £4215.75, Zone 274 (incl. air mail) £4230.75, Zone 275 (incl. air mail) £4245.75, Zone 276 (incl. air mail) £4260.75, Zone 277 (incl. air mail) £4275.75, Zone 278 (incl. air mail) £4290.75, Zone 279 (incl. air mail) £4305.75, Zone 280 (incl. air mail) £4320.75, Zone 281 (incl. air mail) £4335.75, Zone 282 (incl. air mail) £4350.75, Zone 283 (incl. air mail) £4365.75, Zone 284 (incl. air mail) £4380.75, Zone 285 (incl. air mail) £4395.75, Zone 286 (incl. air mail) £4410.75, Zone 287 (incl. air mail) £4425.75, Zone 288 (incl. air mail) £4440.75, Zone 289 (incl. air mail) £4455.75, Zone 290 (incl. air mail) £4470.75, Zone 291 (incl. air mail) £4485.75, Zone 292 (incl. air mail) £4500.75, Zone 293 (incl. air mail) £4515.75, Zone 294 (incl. air mail) £4530.75, Zone 295 (incl. air mail) £4545.75, Zone 296 (incl. air mail) £4560.75, Zone 297 (incl. air mail) £4575.75, Zone 298 (incl. air mail) £4590.75, Zone 299 (incl. air mail) £4605.75, Zone 300 (incl. air mail) £4620.75, Zone 301 (incl. air mail) £4635.75, Zone 302 (incl. air mail) £4650.75, Zone 303 (incl. air mail) £4665.75, Zone 304 (incl. air mail) £4680.75, Zone 305 (incl. air mail) £4695.75, Zone 306 (incl. air mail) £4710.75, Zone 307 (incl. air mail) £4725.75, Zone 308 (incl. air mail) £4740.75, Zone 309 (incl. air mail) £4755.75, Zone 310 (incl. air mail) £4770.75, Zone 311 (incl. air mail) £4785.75, Zone 312 (incl. air mail) £4800.75, Zone 313 (incl. air mail) £4815.75, Zone 314 (incl. air mail) £4830.75, Zone 315 (incl. air mail) £4845.75, Zone 316 (incl. air mail) £4860.75, Zone 317 (incl. air mail) £4875.75, Zone 318 (incl. air mail) £4890.75, Zone 319 (incl. air mail) £4905.75, Zone 320 (incl. air mail) £4920.75, Zone 321 (incl. air mail) £4935.75, Zone 322 (incl. air mail) £4950.75, Zone 323 (incl. air mail) £4965.75, Zone 324 (incl. air mail) £4980.75, Zone 325 (incl. air mail) £4995.75, Zone 326 (incl. air mail) £5010.75, Zone 327 (incl. air mail) £5025.75, Zone 328 (incl. air mail) £5040.75, Zone 329 (incl. air mail) £5055.75, Zone 330 (incl. air mail) £5070.75, Zone 331 (incl. air mail) £5085.75, Zone 332 (incl. air mail) £5100.75, Zone 333 (incl. air mail) £5115.75, Zone 334 (incl. air mail) £5130.75, Zone 335 (incl. air mail) £5145.75, Zone 336 (incl. air mail) £5160.75, Zone 337 (incl. air mail) £5175.75, Zone 338 (incl. air mail) £5190.75, Zone 339 (incl. air mail) £5205.75, Zone 340 (incl. air mail) £5220.75, Zone 341 (incl. air mail) £5235.75, Zone 342 (incl. air mail) £5250.75, Zone 343 (incl. air mail) £5265.75, Zone 344 (incl. air mail) £5280.75, Zone 345 (incl. air mail) £5295.75, Zone 346 (incl. air mail) £5310.75, Zone 347 (incl. air mail) £5325.75, Zone 348 (incl. air mail) £5340.75, Zone 349 (incl. air mail) £5355.75, Zone 350 (incl. air mail) £5370.75, Zone 351 (incl. air mail) £5385.75, Zone 352 (incl. air mail) £5400.75, Zone 353 (incl. air mail) £5415.75, Zone 354 (incl. air mail) £5430.75, Zone 355 (incl. air mail) £5445.75, Zone 356 (incl. air mail) £5460.75, Zone 357 (incl. air mail) £5475.75, Zone 358 (incl. air mail) £5490.75, Zone 359 (incl. air mail) £5505.75, Zone 360 (incl. air mail) £5520.75, Zone 361 (incl. air mail) £5535.75, Zone 362 (incl. air mail) £5550.75, Zone 363 (incl. air mail) £5565.75, Zone 364 (incl. air mail) £5580.75, Zone 365 (incl. air mail) £5595.75, Zone 366 (incl. air mail) £5610.75, Zone 367 (incl. air mail) £5625.75, Zone 368 (incl. air mail) £5640.75, Zone 369 (incl. air mail) £5655.75, Zone 370 (incl. air mail) £5670.75, Zone 371 (incl. air mail) £5685.75, Zone 372 (incl. air mail) £5700.75, Zone 373 (incl. air mail) £5715.75, Zone 374 (incl. air mail) £5730.75, Zone 375 (incl. air mail) £5745.75, Zone 376 (incl. air mail) £5760.75, Zone 377 (incl. air mail) £5775.75, Zone 378 (incl. air mail) £5790.75, Zone 379 (incl. air mail) £5805.75, Zone 380 (incl. air mail) £5820.75, Zone 381 (incl. air mail) £5835.75, Zone 382 (incl. air mail) £5850.75, Zone 383 (incl. air mail) £5865.75, Zone 384 (incl. air mail) £5880.75, Zone 385 (incl. air mail) £5895.75, Zone 386 (incl. air mail) £5910.75, Zone 387 (incl. air mail) £5925.75, Zone 388 (incl. air mail) £5940.75, Zone 389 (incl. air mail) £5955.75, Zone 390 (incl. air mail) £5970.75, Zone 391 (incl. air mail) £5985.75, Zone 392 (incl. air mail) £6000.75, Zone 393 (incl. air mail) £6015.75, Zone 394 (incl. air mail) £6030.75, Zone 395 (incl. air mail) £6045.75, Zone 396 (incl. air mail) £6060.75, Zone 397 (incl. air mail) £6075.75, Zone 398 (incl. air mail) £6090.75, Zone 399 (incl. air mail) £6105.75, Zone 400 (incl. air mail) £6120.75, Zone 401 (incl. air mail) £6135.75, Zone 402 (incl. air mail) £6150.75, Zone 403 (incl. air mail) £6165.75, Zone 404 (incl. air mail) £6180.75, Zone 405 (incl. air mail) £6195.75, Zone 406 (incl. air mail) £6210.75, Zone 407 (incl. air mail) £6225.75, Zone 408 (incl. air mail) £6240.75, Zone 409 (incl. air mail) £6255.75, Zone 410 (incl. air mail) £6270.75, Zone 411 (incl. air mail) £6285.75, Zone 412 (incl. air mail) £6

Senior Tories earn reprieve for Oflot chief

CHRIS BLACKHURST and COLIN BROWN

Senior Cabinet ministers warned Virginia Bottomley not to sack Peter Davis, the National Lottery regulator, over accepting free flights from a company involved in running the lottery.

Mrs Bottomley announced her decision to back him last night and one reason for government support was believed to be to avoid giving in to media pressure for his resignation. It would also have been seen as a blot on the lottery's success.

The Secretary of State for National Heritage avoided an embarrassing Commons statement, but issued a statement after a meeting with Mr Davis. She said there was never any doubt about his integrity, although she had warned him it was unwise to take the free flights in America from GTECH, a stakeholder in Camelot, the lottery organiser.

Mrs Bottomley said he had assured her there were "no other issues" which might come to light later that might affect her decision. But she told him to maintain "a proper distance

from the company and its constituent parts" in future.

Her vote of confidence was challenged by opposition leaders last night. Robert Maclennan, the Liberal Democrat heritage spokesman, said: "Mr Davis is not fit to regulate a million-pound business if he cannot regulate his own behaviour."

News of Mr Davis's reprieve came as fresh revelations raised further questions about the regulation of the lottery. He refused to insert a clause in Camelot's licence giving him the ability to cap its earnings.

When the company's licence was drawn up last year, it was based on predictions of sales of £3bn. In fact, Camelot is forecasting sales of around £5bn.

At the time, Mr Davis rejected including a clause allowing the percentage taken by the company to be revised downwards if the lottery did better than expected. In an interview broadcast on BBC TV's *Newsnight* last month, Mr Davis admitted dropping the idea: "Had we offered them a licence, the financial terms of which could have been changed at the whim of the regulator, then

frankly we wouldn't have had any reputable companies applying for the licence."

An Oflot spokeswoman said yesterday it was true sales had exceeded expectations but there was no prospect of revising Camelot's contract. The terms of the licence, she said, would stand until the licence expired in 2001.

Meanwhile 25 MPs continued to put Camelot under the spotlight by signing an early day motion condemning plans by the operator to sell lists of its winners to junk mail firms. Under the Data Protection Act,

holders of computerised personal details must declare what they plan to do with the data. Camelot has registered under the category "trading in personal information".

This does not relate to the company's databases for shopkeepers who carry its terminals or its personnel records, which are covered by separate entries.

The motion tabled by Mr Maclennan, condemns the possible sale as "a potential infringement upon the privacy of winners", and says it "will cause a great deal of distress to those who wish to withhold their

identity from the public domain".

Ian Young of Manches, a firm of London solicitors with a large data protection practice, said Camelot had "showed they could sell information if they felt so minded. It does not mean they can do it now but one day they may want to".

A Camelot spokeswoman said trading in personal information not only covers selling lists "but also incidental information collected for other purposes". Camelot, she said, had no intention of selling the names of prize-winners.



Peter Davis: Backed to avoid victory for media

Ashby libel case: Threat of bankruptcy adds to politician's woes after trial that exposed stormy private life to glare of publicity

MP left to ponder folly of a legal nightmare

REBECCA FOWLER

It may be one of the most foolhardy libel actions ever taken. As a tear-stained David Ashby pushed his way through the crowds outside the High Court yesterday, he must have wondered why he had seen fit to jeopardise his family, political career and financial security.

In the three-week court drama, that sank to absurd and tragic depths, Mr Ashby exposed every detail of his private life, from his sexual impotence to adoration of his garden pond, condemned his wife as an obsessive, spiteful and foul-mouthed woman, risked bankruptcy and still failed to convince the jury that he was not a homosexual, a liar and a hypocrite.

The decline and fall of Mr Ashby, a grammar-school boy from High Wycombe, is a bewildering tale of misguided pride and self-deceit. For nearly three decades he enjoyed an unspectacular public life as a barrister and in local government before rising to the backbenches of Westminster as Tory MP for Leicestershire North West in 1983. Although his marriage was always fiery, his career was pedestrian.

The most notable controversies in his political life were a call for a golf ban on Wimbledon Common in 1984 after his Italian wife, Silvana, was hit on the nose by an errant ball, and a telling off for writing Christmas cards during a House of Commons committee session. His spectacular arrival in the spotlight came as a wave of

leaze allegations against Tory MPs began to make a public mockery of John Major's "Back to Basics" campaign. The *Sunday Times* revealed that he had shared a double bed with Dr Claran Kilduff, 32, his neighbour, at a hotel in France - the Chateau Tilques in Orme - when twin-bedded rooms were available for the same price.

When Mr Ashby left his wife in 1993 after 28 "tempestuous" years of marriage, he said he was depressed, ill and desperate for friendship, and he found it in a man. "I can honestly say I had no one. I'd spent a life being isolated... I'd been isolated from my family because of my wife's attitude, and from friends."

While searching for a flat to escape his miserable home life, he met Dr Kilduff in his garden. Apparently he provided a sympathetic listening ear, and the two men immediately struck up a friendship. Shortly afterwards Mr Ashby bought the flat above Dr Kilduff's, and his wife's suspicions were aroused, although both men have consistently denied they are homosexual.

They agreed to go to France together on the understanding, according to Mr Ashby, they shared a room to save money.

Already the Tory party had hunched from one humiliating sleaze scandal to another. As one Tory MP affair was revealed after another, it became clear the party had placed itself in the line of its own fire with "Back to Basics". Tim Yeo, the MP, exposed as the father of an illegitimate child, was the first to fall in a flush of exposés.



The politician's wife: Silvana Ashby being interviewed by reporters outside the High Court yesterday after the verdict was announced

With the spotlight on the domestic lives of Tory MPs, Chateau Tilques was already Mr Ashby's downfall. When the *Sunday Times* received anonymous phone calls in 1993 alleging that he was gay, and had left his wife to live close to Dr Kilduff in south-west London, the paper saw the next sleaze scandal in its reach.

A senior reporter was immediately sent to Mrs Ashby's home, also in Putney, to put the allegations to her. Although Mrs Ashby denies she in any way gave information, she could not deny the facts being put to her.

When the story broke, Mr Ashby was besieged by jour-

nalists at the family home, with Mrs Ashby and Alexandra, 27, their daughter, who flew over from Milan where she works as a stockbroker.

According to Mrs Ashby, her husband desperately appealed to her to go out and issue a statement saying she was a liar, and she had made the story up. Mrs Ashby remained at her husband's side, but refused to lie for him.

"He said 'I've got a solution to get rid of all those people, you just have to go and say you've made a terrible mistake, that you've been lying, that you're a very vengeful and spiteful, and the reason these things came out is because you're very sor-

ry I left you.' Mrs Ashby said. "I said 'Really David there's a limit to what I will do.'"

Not only was Mr Ashby left to justify himself, a journalist had recovered the bill for the hotel room at Chateau Tilques from the dustbin at his Putney flat. In typical bombastic style, Mr Ashby went on the defensive, dismissing suggestions he was having an affair with Dr Kilduff as "tripe".

But the *Sunday Times* was eager not to let the scandal it had set in motion out of its grasp. Although Mr Ashby was not a high-profile figure, in the political climate his alleged hypocrisy was the perfect scandal. It received another tip-off

that Mr Ashby had travelled to Goa on holiday, and again shared a bed with a man.

This time the anonymous source proved less effective. Despite confusing evidence from various staff at the hotel, described as a discreet love nest where few questions were asked, it emerged Mr Ashby had indeed travelled there alone.

Mr Ashby saw his chance for revenge. If the newspaper had unearthed the right story, it had tripped over the wrong facts. In an act that sealed his fate, he decided to take both the *Sunday Times* and Andrew Neil, the former editor, to court.

Comment, page 15
Family at war, Section Two

MP wins libel damages

Tory MP Peter Bottomley was yesterday awarded £40,000 damages by a High Court jury for libel in an article in the *Sunday Express*.

Justin Walford, legal adviser to Express Newspapers, which was also ordered to pay an estimated £250,000 costs of the eight-day trial, said an appeal was being considered because of questions raised over press freedom.

Mr Bottomley, 51, MP for Ebbw Vale in South Wales, was accused in the article last January of betraying paratrooper Private

Lee Clegg, who was in jail for the murder of a jowriter in Northern Ireland, by appearing at a meeting with the Sinn Féin leader Martin McGuinness.

The former Northern Ireland minister whose wife, Virginia, is Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, said yesterday: "It would have been possible to have avoided this writ if we had come to some agreement earlier on. I don't mind robust criticism... but this stopped me doing what I have devoted my life to - ending the violence in Northern Ireland."

Mensa board 'kept in dark'

WILL BENNETT

Senior members of Mensa did not know that Harold Gale, the society's executive director, was using his position to increase subscriptions to a magazine called *Mind Games* run by his own company and that he sold puzzles to newspapers who thought that they were buying them from the society.

Malcolm Duthie, representing Mr Gale, told the tribunal yesterday that Mensa's directors knew about his private business activities because they both used a Mr Nigel Tinsley as their accountant.

He said: "Nigel Tinsley was the accountant for Harold Gale Associates and British Mensa Ltd. He did the end of the year

missal at the tribunal in Birmingham.

Mensa says that Mr Gale made thousands of pounds by using his position to increase subscriptions to a magazine called *Mind Games* run by his own company and that he sold puzzles to newspapers who thought that they were buying them from the society.

Malcolm Duthie, representing Mr Gale, told the tribunal yesterday that Mensa's directors knew about his private business activities because they both used a Mr Nigel Tinsley as their accountant.

He said: "Nigel Tinsley was the accountant for Harold Gale Associates and British Mensa Ltd. He did the end of the year

accounts for both and would have to liaise with Mr Neil Goulder, the treasurer of the British Mensa Committee."

Mr Duthie asked Mr Sutton: "You said *Mind Games* was tolerated because it was believed to be an outside activity?"

Mr Sutton replied: "All the directors were aware of Harold Gale Associates and all knew the flyers were put out for *Mind Games* with the information packs."

"But Harold Gale was an executive and should be working in our best interests at all times. None were aware of him producing any puzzles for his own benefit."

Mr Duthie asked Mr Sutton: "If you had known Mr Gale had

operated a company that had produced puzzles for profit using Mensa's name in a mutually beneficial relationship would it have altered your consideration of this matter?"

He replied: "I don't think I would ever allow that kind of position to occur because it is a direct conflict of interest. I don't think any such operation could have been mutually beneficial."

Mr Duthie revealed that Sir Clive Sinclair, the inventor who is Mensa's chairman, was a director of Thought Promotions, a company set up by Mr Gale in 1982. He told the tribunal it was set up to make a profit for Mr Gale but used the Mensa name to promote the society.



Harold Gale: Accused of using office for own profit

Mr Sutton said he was not aware of the deal but accepted that Sir Clive must have had "full knowledge" that Mr Gale set up the firm.

The tribunal continues today.

Army officer's flight to golf course lands him in hot water

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

A senior army officer who took a military helicopter to fly to a golf tournament - and sent his clubs by chauffeur-driven car - has been disciplined by the Ministry of Defence.

In June, Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas Connon, commanding officer, 3rd Highlanders, booked an army gazelle helicopter to take him and a colleague to a VE Day celebration and then to an inter-regimental golf competition. The VE ceremony took place only 40 miles from Lt-Col Connon's home in Nairn.

There was no room in the helicopter for their clubs, so Lt-Col Connon's driver took them the 220 miles from Nairn to the golf course in Prestwick by car. The helicopter, which belonged to the Army Air Corps, cost £2,000 per hour to run.


The driver returned to Prestwick two days later to take the men home. Lt-Col Connon, who had won the tournament the previous year, returned in triumph, successfully defending his title.

Nicholas Soames, armed forces minister, said yesterday that the incident had been investigated. He confirmed that "a gazelle helicopter deviated

from its task to take two Army officers to a golf tournament".

Replying to a written question from David Clark, Labour Defence spokesman, Mr Soames said: "There was no dishonest intent" on Lt-Col Connon's part. "He did, however, make an error of judgment".

Mr Clark condemned "a blatant misuse of taxpayers' money". He said such behaviour "appears to be a regular feature in the Tory-run MoD and has no place in the modern army. Poor management and abuse of taxpayers' money are the order of the day and I am disappointed by the Minister's complacent and puny response."



0345 881 881
EUROPEAN PASSENGER SERVICES

PUT YOUR FEET UP, THEN DO YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING.

EUROSTAR £5. £10. £50. GIFT VOUCHERS.

Avoid those empty stockings on Christmas morning by booking your Eurostar vouchers before midday on December the 20th. Just call or pop into Waterloo International and we'll make sure they get a Christmas present to remember.

Passenger services sell-off: Stagecoach, which has overtaken all rivals in 10 years, is to operate South West Trains Bus-driver couple win first rail line

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

A bus company which has been frequently criticised for its aggressive tactics towards rivals was yesterday awarded the first privatised passenger rail line.

The confirmation that Stagecoach, Britain's biggest bus company, had won the right to operate South West Trains, which runs the domestic services out of Waterloo station in London, was immediately attacked by Labour who called it "a

sad day for Britain's railways". Stagecoach has, however, promised that it will "maintain present service levels", keep fares down and improve the quality of service by imposing more onerous Passenger's Charter targets on itself. The company admitted that there would be no chance of buying new trains for the line because the seven-year franchise term was not long enough to justify the purchase of new rolling stock.

Brian Cox, the company's executive director, said yesterday he could not guarantee that there would be no cuts to services. The company is only contracted to provide up to the minimum passenger service requirements - 86 per cent of the existing timetable - set by the franchise director, Roger Salmon, and the subject of a partially successful legal action by anti-privatisation campaigners last week. But Mr Cox said Stagecoach "was not in the business of cutting back on services but of building up volumes of passengers."

Stagecoach, created 10 years ago by Brian Souter and his sister, Ann Gloag, has built up its business by taking over 30 companies around the country, often using methods which have been criticised by the Office of Fair Trading and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Brian Wilson, Labour's transport spokesman, said: "It is particularly ironic that privatisation, which began with rhetoric on competition, has ended up with the first franchise going to a ruthlessly anti-

competitive company which has faced 24 inquiries into its predatory behaviour." At a press conference yesterday, Mr Souter defended his company's record, saying that no one had accused it of running poor services or "of not being innovative". The company admits there will be job losses at SWT but hopes these can be achieved by voluntary redundancies.

Mr Salmon said Stagecoach would require on average £49m subsidy per year, compared with BR's net subsidy last year of £63.4m for the SWT services. This will be welcomed by the Government, which has always argued that privatisation would lead to savings. But Stagecoach will struggle to achieve it without industrial strife.

Stagecoach said its performance targets for SWT would be higher than the existing ones with punctuality up by 2 per cent to 92 per cent for suburban services and a punctuality target for mainline services of 89 per cent. Reliability targets will go up by 1 per cent to 99 per cent. But these improvements in targets will only take effect 12 months after the start of the franchise.

GLENDIA COOPER

The first step towards the creation of a national partnership for ageing will be taken today, as the great and the good assemble in London to discuss research on the matter.

Fifty-five key people from the fields of industry, research, policy, funding bodies, consumers and providers will gather at the Royal Society of Medicine to consider policy for an ageing population and how it can be integrated.

The meeting is being moderated by Sir Ronald Oxburgh, Rector of Imperial College, London, and formerly chief scientist at the Ministry of Defence. Representatives from Age Concern, the Red Cross, British Geriatrics Society and World Health Organisation will also be there.

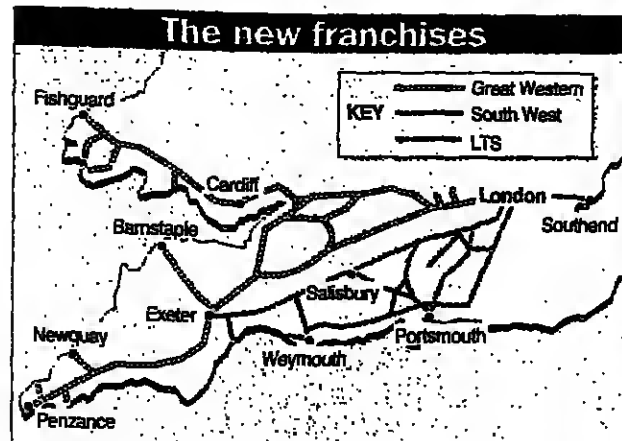
Although Britons are living longer they are getting old, with extra years of disability not healthy life, according to a survey earlier this month which found that healthy life expectancy for 65-year-old men had not altered from seven years between 1976 to 1992.

No formal links exist between academic research into ageing and industry. The conference will consider whether strong links are needed between the two areas, whether technology is being effectively exploited in the care of old people, whether there should be a national focus on ageing and where the British position on the world stage should be.

There have been calls for networking in areas such as shared research methodologies, large-scale multi-centre trials and cross-fertilisation of expertise.

The idea of a National Ageing Centre similar to those in the United States, Japan and France will also be discussed. These integrate research with technology and incorporate social studies, considering the age people work until and how to improve the health of the elderly.

It is unlikely a building would be commissioned as a centre, although a facility for discussing strategy might be considered.



'Predatory' firm's tactics kill off rivals

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR

If the Government had wanted to choose the most controversial candidate as the flagship for its privatised rail programme, it could not have done better than going for Stagecoach. It is Britain's largest bus company and at once its most famous and most infamous.

Stagecoach has been built up by the brother-and-sister team of Brian Souter and Ann Gloag, both former bus drivers who started the company from redundancy pay-outs, and its profitability is demonstrated by the fact that Mrs Gloag recently bought Beaufort Castle, near Liverpool, the seat of the late Lord Lovat, a far cry from the coun-

cil house in Perth where she was brought up.

Stagecoach's infancy comes from its aggressive and predatory behaviour towards scores of bus companies which it has either bought up or driven out of business. Stagecoach Holdings now consists of an international empire of 7,300 buses, 20,000 employees, a turnover of £430m and profits in the past six months of nearly £30m. Its shares, now quoted on the Stock Exchange, recently hit an all-time high.

The company, a child of the 1983 Act which deregulated the bus industry, makes no bones about the fact that it feels a local monopoly is the best way to provide services. In a succession of battles it has either taken over

all its competitors or flooded an area with so many buses that others could not compete.

In Dardington last year, for example, it squeezed out local operators by running free services for six weeks, behaviour which the Monopolies and Mergers Commission called "predatory" and "against the public interest". There have been five detailed MMC inquiries over the past year and other battles are looming. Drivers working for Selkent,

one of the two London bus companies Stagecoach took over last year, were recently given 90 days notice of termination of employment in a fight against the unions as the company wants to reduce drivers' wages.

Unlike many other aggressive companies, however, Stagecoach does not fight shy of the media. Yesterday, Brian Cox, executive director and the director in charge of the southern area, spent all morning happily

talking about his company's controversial record.

To gain control of South West Trains, Stagecoach has put in what looks like a very low bid requiring £20m savings on variable costs of £1.25m. Mr Cox said: "We think these cost reductions are realistic and achievable." However, a battle with the unions, particularly the train drivers in Aslef, seems inevitable. Mr Cox says Stagecoach's size is an advantage be-

cause "if a meltdown situation occurs we can survive it".

Nor does Mr Cox disguise the fact that there will be sharp reductions in the 4,000 staff at present employed by the train company. "In the bus industry we have got rid of a lot of managers and management layers. We also expect our staff to work harder than they might have been used to. We will be instilling the same culture in South West Trains."

There may be some relief in the bus industry if Stagecoach is now concentrating on the railways. As a senior London manager who fought off a bid from the company said: "Stagecoach tends to leave the other big players in the bus industry alone but it makes everybody who works for smaller companies apprehensive. They tend to go into companies and shoot the management. They also tend to reduce staff drastically."

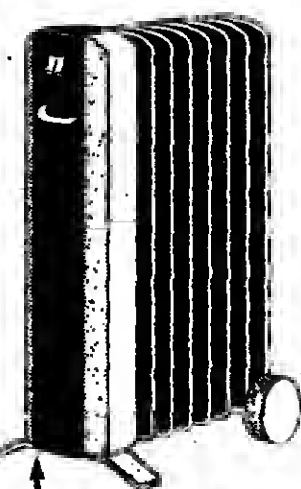


Success story: Ann Gloag at Stagecoach's garage in Perth. She and her brother now run Britain's largest bus company

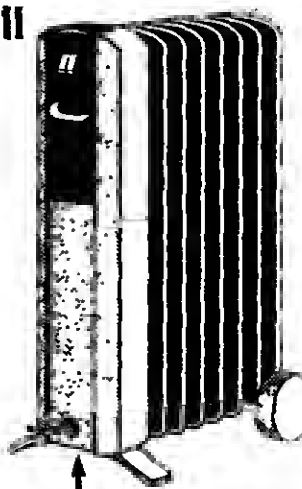
Photograph: Stephen Mansfield

IMPORTANT NOTICE SAFETY WARNING STOP USE IMMEDIATELY

Dimplex New Style Column Electric Oil Filled Radiator
Product Recall



Model Numbers
CR1507, CR2009 & CR2009T
(model number is shown here underneath front end)



Model Number
BQ15CR
(model number is shown here underneath front end)

It has come to our notice that some of the NEW STYLE column type oil filled electric radiators, represent a safety hazard with the risk of dangerous fumes and fire. These heaters are easily identified by the two large wheels.

These heaters have only been on sale since October 1995. If you have purchased one, you should follow this procedure:

- 1 Do not use the heater.
- 2 Unplug it from the mains supply immediately.
- 3 IMMEDIATELY TELEPHONE THE DIMPLEX CUSTOMER SERVICE LINE BELOW. EVEN IF YOU HAVE STOPPED USING THE HEATER AND YOU HAVE ALREADY RETURNED IT TO THE PLACE OF PURCHASE, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU TELEPHONE US IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO.
- 4 Return it to the place of purchase for either a full refund or an alternative replacement.
- 5 You should still return the product even if there are no apparent problems.
- 6 If you have any questions or are unable to return the product please telephone the Dimplex customer service line.

Dimplex Customer Service Line (0800 636434). There will be no charge for this call. Lines open from 8am to 8pm, daily (answerphone in use at all other times).

If you are unable to telephone, please write to: Dimplex (UK) Limited, Customer Services (Radiators), FREEPOST (no stamp needed), S01638 Millbrook, Southampton, S015 0UH.

Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this may cause

Dimplex

At least 25% off all Christmas decorations.*

Star Tree Decoration Available in Gold or Silver

EXTRA VALUE
£1.49 SAVE 40p

Shatterproof Bauble Cluster with Astral Glitter Available in Red or Blue

EXTRA VALUE
£1.29 SAVE 40p

Printed Ribbon Per Roll

EXTRA VALUE
£1.99 SAVE 50p

Astral Tinsel Available in a range of Colours - 2m

EXTRA VALUE
£1.99 SAVE 50p

Taper Candles Available in a range of Colours Pack of 4

EXTRA VALUE
£1.99 SAVE 50p

Steady Burn Christmas Tree Lights Box of 50

EXTRA VALUE
£1.99 SAVE £2.50

OPEN 9AM-8PM MONDAY-SATURDAY AND EVERY BANK HOLIDAY. NOW OPEN SUNDAY: ENGLAND AND WALES, MOST STORES OPEN 10AM-6PM. SCOTLAND 9AM-6PM. TEL: (0181) 200 0200 FOR YOUR NEAREST TEXAS. OFFER SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. ALL SIZES APPROXIMATE. MOST BULKY PURCHASES SOLD IN CARRYHOME PACKS. PLEASE CHECK WITH YOUR LOCAL STORE BEFORE TRAVELLING LONG DISTANCES. SMALLER STORES MAY NOT CARRY A FULL RANGE AND OPENING TIMES MAY VARY. PRODUCTS AND OFFERS MAY VARY IN NORTHERN IRELAND. *EXCLUDES TREES, CARDS, WRAP AND CRACKERS.

politics



John McCarthy, the former Middle East hostage, yesterday joined the 13-year-old Syrian Hussain (above) and other refugees, in a demonstration outside the House of Commons against the Government's Immigration and Asylum Bill, the protest came as ministers plans to cut benefits for asylum seekers early in the New Year

Refugees in Commons protest

received another setback, writes Nicholas Timmins. The High Court gave two London boroughs, Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham, leave for a judicial review of the planned benefit

changes, threatening a further delay to benefit cuts which were originally planned to take effect on 8 January. Ministers have promised that they will not now be implemented before the Commons

has a chance to debate them in the New Year, but yesterday's decision means they will be challenged in the courts unless the Government postpones the package until late next year. The local authorities argue

that the Government is behaving unreasonably in removing the right to housing benefit for many asylum seekers while still leaving local authorities with a duty to house them under homelessness legislation. The Asylum Bill will remove that, but it is unlikely to become law before July at the earliest. Photograph: Kalpesh Lathiga

Fishing quotas: Government in effort to avoid more embarrassing divisions on Europe

Tory appeal to party loyalty fails to win day

With defeat looming at the hands Euro-sceptics representing fishing ports in yesterday's debate on fisheries policy, the Government responded with a combination of cash and appeals to party loyalty.

Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland, urged MPs from the South-west and the east coast not to risk compromising the respect they had earned among the fishing communities by voting with Labour, who he called "a bunch of sell-out merchants". However, his pleas were in vain as a motion endorsing government fisheries policy was rejected by 299 votes to 297.

Inside Parliament
Stephen Goodwin

improvements to harbours and fish marketing and processing. The grants, worth £2m to the industry, had been axed for England and Wales in the Budget. To jeers from Opposition benches, Mr Baldry said the change of mind followed representations by Tory fishing MPs. He also disclosed an offer to fishermen of £100,000 in compensation from Spain whose vessels get greater access to UK waters from January. European fisheries ministers meet in Brussels later this week to consider further cuts on catches of herring, mackerel and plaice in the North Sea and significant restrictions for fishermen in the South-west, the Irish Sea and west of Scotland waters.

gether and when Mr Forsyth said he was sure they did not want the UK to act in breach of its Treaty obligations there was a cry of "Oh yes we do". Intervening, John Townsend, the right-wing MP for Bridlington, said he had some sympathy for Mr Forsyth. "He can't be blamed for the betrayal of the fishing industry by Sir Edward Heath," he said. The former Tory prime minister made no immediate reaction, but later turned on his party colleague, describing the remark as "abusive".

I am not a traitor to my country," Sir Edward said, claiming the CFP arrangements that fishermen complain of were laid down in 1983, long after his prime ministership. Full of scorn for the sceptics, Sir Edward had more time for the fishing MPs but reminded them they owed their constituents not only their energies but their judgement. He did not think even fishermen wanted to destroy the Government.

The appearance of Mr Forsyth at the despatch box was an odd move. Normally fisheries debates are opened by agriculture minister and though Mr Forsyth recalled his upbringing in Abroath, his principal job seemed to be to charm the Eurosceptics. His soul mate, Michael Portillo, was on the front bench for the opening speech, an unusual setting for the Secretary of State for Defence. Meanwhile, the Minister of Agriculture, Douglas Hogg, was roaming the backbenches trying to cajole potential rebels. Mr Forsyth said he understood fishermen's fear about the Common Fisheries Policy allowing equal access by all EU fleets but believed it was exaggerated. "There is no Spanish Armada," he said - and that was because the Government had not walked away from the CFP but improved it from within. Tory Eurosceptics argued for abandoning the CFP alto-

gether and when Mr Forsyth said he was sure they did not want the UK to act in breach of its Treaty obligations there was a cry of "Oh yes we do". Intervening, John Townsend, the right-wing MP for Bridlington, said he had some sympathy for Mr Forsyth. "He can't be blamed for the betrayal of the fishing industry by Sir Edward Heath," he said. The former Tory prime minister made no immediate reaction, but later turned on his party colleague, describing the remark as "abusive".

Nine cities 'need greater powers'

NICHOLAS SCHOON

Nine more English towns and cities deserve powerful local councils and independence from their local county councils, the Government's Local Government Commission recommended yesterday. The nine should cover functions such as education and social services, at present run by the counties in shire England, and take responsibility for the full range of local government services, the commission told the Environment Secretary, John Gummer.

The district councils of Blackburn, Blackpool, Halton (better known as Runcorn and Widnes), Peterborough, Thurrock, Warrington and the Wirral (Telford new town) ought to have their own all-purpose councils. So should the north Kent councils of Dartford and Gravesend. However, they should be merged into one large authority.

Mr Gummer has to decide whether to accept the proposals and then get the final version approved by Parliament. That will wrap up a controversial process of deciding a new structure for local government outside of England's seven biggest conurbations, which has lasted more than three years. The commission's chairman, Sir David Cooksey, and the chief executive, Dr Bob Chilton, yesterday criticised an earlier decision to let tiny Rutland split off from Leicestershire and have its own all-purpose council. They felt its population of 33,000 was too small. Mr Gummer has also ordered that 38 district councils scattered through England should become more powerful unitary authorities, splitting off from their counties. The commission decided there is not a case for historic cities like Exeter and Norwich to have unitary councils, much to the anger of local citizens.

The best choice
of Christmas gifts.
Only at PC World.

INTEREST
FREE OPTION
on all desktop and
portable PCs.

SAVE OVER £30
MULTIMEDIA PC AND COLOUR INKJET PRINTER

PACKARD BELL 905D MULTIMEDIA

- Intel Pentium 75MHz processor.
- 8MB RAM, 528MB hard disk.
- Quad speed CD-ROM drive, 3D stereo soundcard & speakers.
- Over £1000 worth of software.

HEWLETT PACKARD DESKJET 660

- 600 x 300 DPI resolution.
- Up to 4 pages per minute output.
- Includes Disney Print Studio.

Total separate selling price: £1629.99.

£1599 EX VAT

MULTIMEDIA PCs
FROM £699

ADVENT

Intel Pentium 75MHz processor, 8MB RAM, 528MB hard disk, 17" SVGA monitor, dual speed CD-ROM drive, Windows 3.11, 100MB free space.

MODEL: 9500 MULTIMEDIA

£699 EX VAT

PACKARD BELL

Intel Pentium 75MHz processor, 8MB RAM, 528MB hard disk, 17" SVGA monitor, dual speed CD-ROM drive, Windows 3.11, 100MB free space.

MODEL: 905D MULTIMEDIA

£1019 EX VAT

PACKARD BELL

Intel Pentium 75MHz processor, 8MB RAM, 528MB hard disk, 17" SVGA monitor, dual speed CD-ROM drive, Windows 3.11, 100MB free space.

MODEL: 905D MULTIMEDIA

£1529 EX VAT

APRICOT

Intel Pentium 75MHz processor, 8MB RAM, 528MB hard disk, 17" SVGA monitor, dual speed CD-ROM drive, Windows 3.11, 100MB free space.

MODEL: 905D MULTIMEDIA

£1349 EX VAT

IBM

Intel Pentium 75MHz processor, 8MB RAM, 528MB hard disk, 17" SVGA monitor, dual speed CD-ROM drive, Windows 3.11, 100MB free space.

MODEL: 905D MULTIMEDIA

£1299 EX VAT

OVER 75 PCs IN STOCK

ACER

Intel Pentium 75MHz processor, 8MB RAM, 528MB hard disk, 17" SVGA monitor, dual speed CD-ROM drive, Windows 3.11, 100MB free space.

MODEL: 905D MULTIMEDIA

£1199 EX VAT

SOFTWARE - OVER 1200 TITLES

ENCARTA '96

Microsoft's new fully Anglified 1996 version of the complete 28 volume encyclopedia in one CD-ROM.

£42 EX VAT

VIRGIN 4 PACK

Super pack comprising of 4 titles:

- Superstar
- Hudson KA-50
- Canoe Fodder 3
- Kick Off 3

£29 EX VAT

PGA GOLF

The most realistic golf simulation. Play against professional golfers in this all action simulation.

£17 EX VAT

STAR TREK

A Final Voyage. Boldly go where no man has gone before. Captain the crew of the Star Ship Enterprise.

£15 EX VAT

HUNDREDS MORE GIFT IDEAS IN STORE

EPSON PRINTER

Colour Inkjet Printer.

720 x 720 DPI resolution. Up to 4 pages per minute colour output. Windows 3.11 compatible. FREE Microsoft Word, version 5.5A.

MODEL: STYLUS II

£299 EX VAT

CANON PRINTER

Colour Inkjet Printer.

300 x 300 DPI resolution. Up to 4 pages per minute. Resolution measurement technology. Free Disney Print Studio software.

MODEL: HP C4000

£249 EX VAT

HP PRINTER

Hewlett Packard Colour Inkjet Printer.

Up to 4 pages per minute print speed. Resolution measurement technology. Free Disney Print Studio software.

MODEL: HP D560c

£279 EX VAT

MULTIMEDIA KIT

Creative Labs Home multimedia kit.

Quad speed drive. 16 bit soundcard & stereo speakers. Top Microsoft titles.

MODEL: HOME CD KIT

£299 EX VAT

MODEM

US Robotics Voice Enabled.

32K fax modem. Complete communications solution. Fax, phone, data and voicemail. Cables & software included.

£99 EX VAT

JOYSTICKS

Microsoft Digital Joystick & Fury.

Highly responsive & ergonomic. 4-way joystick & 4-way button. Includes Fury the game from Microsoft.

£59 EX VAT

JOYSTICKS

Somarc G-Force.

Unique glowing. Light probe includes Fleet Defender and Grand Prix Manager software.

£39.99 EX VAT

STORES NATIONWIDE
0990 464 464
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK (EXCEPT CHRISTMAS DAY)

BRISTOL
BIRMINGHAM
CARDIFF
GLoucester
LONDON
MANCHESTER
Preston
Salford
Sheffield
Southampton
Stoke
Telford
Warrington
Widnes

6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION OR 48 MONTHLY REPAYMENTS

Ask for details. Amount to each instalment is subject to full terms and conditions. Example: cash price £1000, 0% deposit, loan amount £1000, 6 months interest free, 48 monthly payments of £20.83, total amount paid £1000.00. APR 27.8%.

APR 27.8%

PC WORLD
THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE

SPECIAL OFFERS

FLORENCE £199*

£354 NEW YEAR SPECIAL
Time Off
4 nights in central ★★
Panorama, B&B. Flights from Gatwick.

PARIS £119*

2 nights in centrally located
★★ Grand Hotel de Paris
en suite bathroom, B&B.

AMSTERDAM £129*

2 nights in centrally located ★★
Bridge Hotel, en suite bathroom, B&B.

* REDUCED PRICES APPLY TO CONFIRMED BOOKINGS BEFORE 18.00 THURSDAY 21 DECEMBER 95.
Prices based upon 2 sharing a room. Single room supplements apply. All offers subject to availability.

For reservations phone Mon to Fri 09.00 to 18.00.
0181-960 9066
CITYTRAVELLER DIRECT LTD
4 Embarcadero, London W10 6BD

appeal to
loyalty
win da

ne cities to
greater power

SPECIAL OFFER

2119 PAR

AMSTERDAM

29.

international

Amateur video revives shock of Rabin's death

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

The muzzle-flash from the gun in Yigal Amir's hand as he fires point-blank into Yitzhak Rabin's back is clearly visible in a frame from an amateur video published for the first time in an Israeli newspaper yesterday.

The Prime Minister, as he moves towards the open door of his car, has not yet reacted to the impact of the bullet and the heads of his bodyguards have not begun to turn towards the assassin.

The shock of the assassination of Rabin on 4 November was recreated for Israeli television yesterday when the *Yediot Aharnot* and later Channel 2 television showed the videotape of the killing taken by Ronni Kempler, 37, an accountant at the state comptroller's office. "It is national masochism to watch this," said one Israeli who refused to open a newspaper or turn on the television all day.

The quality of the tape, for which Mr Kempler received \$400,000 (£266,000), is poor during the decisive moments before the murder. At the end of the peace rally which Rabin had addressed, Mr Kempler filmed for eight minutes behind Tel Aviv town hall as he waited for Rabin to emerge. It was late at night and the light was poor. Nevertheless he saw Mr Amir standing, one leg crossed nonchalantly over the other, beside

a tuft in which flowers were growing. There are clear shots of Rabin coming down the crowded stairs, with at least two bodyguards. As Rabin walks towards his car a dark shadow moves around behind him and stretches out an arm.

As Mr Amir fires, the cone



Yigal Amir: Trial opened and adjourned yesterday

of light from the muzzle of his gun makes it look like a blowtorch. The dark shadows and indistinct forms make it difficult to distinguish the killer and his victim, but convey an air of menace and drama.

The video provides no new information about the blunders which made it easy for Mr Amir to kill Rabin, though it does prove that at the moment of the assassination he was acting alone. The commission investigating the killing is focusing on the failure by the Shin Bet

security agency to protect Rabin. Shin Bet's head, known as Kaf, and other senior officers have received letters saying they are likely to be blamed for the security failure and advising them to hire lawyers.

The officers warned by the commission are refusing to resign, though four more junior officials have already done so. Shimon Peres, the new Prime Minister, has turned down a resignation offer from Kaf. The government does not want all the blame to be placed on the Shin Bet, in part because it thinks this will allow the right-wing parties to evade responsibility for setting the stage for Rabin's murder.

Mr Amir was in court yesterday for the first day of his trial but after Judge Edmond Levy had read out the charges he adjourned proceedings to 23 January to give time for Mr Amir's lawyers to prepare a defence. Mr Amir has continued to justify the assassination. Wearing a black skullcap and chewing gum, he smiled as he entered the court and, as he sat down, drew his hand across his neck as if somebody was slitting his throat.

His father Shlomo, a religious Jew, prayed continuously and tried unsuccessfully to beg forgiveness from Eitan Haber, a senior aide of Rabin. The government is worried that Mr Amir will use his trial to advocate his views.



Fatal impact: The moment, captured by an amateur video cameraman, when Yigal Amir (right) shot the Israeli Prime Minister point-blank in the back. The picture was published yesterday by the daily *Yediot Aharnot*.

Peking ejects 'biased' foreign reporter

TERESA POOLE
Peking

The Chinese government is expelling a foreign journalist by refusing to renew his annual press credentials, despite protests from three European governments including the German Foreign Minister.

In the latest signal that China's hard-liners are confident enough to ignore international opinion, a resident German journalist has been told to leave China by Thursday next week. Henrik Bork, the Peking bureau chief for the *Frankfurter Rundschau* since January 1992, was told by officials that his reporting was "aggressive, biased and attacked people and personalities".

The Foreign Ministry spokesman, Chen Jian, yesterday failed to supply any reasons for forcing Mr Bork to leave Peking - and indeed denied that he was being expelled. "I think all of you know that expulsion is entirely different from no extension for visa," he said. Press accreditation is a pre-requisite for renewing a visa.

The allegations appear to date back to articles last year just before the visit by the Prime Minister, Li Peng, to Germany. Mr Bork described how Mr Li ducked questions about his role in the June 1989 Tiananmen massacre and compared him to a "dictator". During his visit, Mr Li was acutely embarrassed by



Henrik Bork: Accused of 'aggressive' reporting

Absent minds keep ancient hatreds alive in Hebron

Hebron - It was the street of forgetfulness. First came the three Palestinians in the clothing store, sewing sleeves on to shirts with old electric machines, promising us that no portrait of Yasser Arafat would ever hang in their store until the Israelis had left. King David Street, an Israeli jeep passed the front door, then three Israeli settlers, Uzi in their hands, stared through the windows at us.

"How can we believe in the peace process when this is going on?" the youngest Palestinian asked, oddly balding for a man in his mid-twenties. "The Jews want us out of this street. They put curfews on us and they come round in the afternoons and at night, especially on Saturdays, to shout abuse. They call us 'dogs' and shout 'Death to Arabs' and throw stones. Now

Jews and Muslims display selective memories of West Bank city's bloody history, writes Robert Fisk

no Arab in Hebron will come and shop here because they don't want trouble, and three shopkeepers on the other side of the street have already closed down and moved elsewhere in town. Don't you see that this is what the Jews want?"

But didn't there used to be a Jewish community in Hebron, asked innocently? Didn't there used to be a Jewish quarter in Hebron until the 1930s? "Never," the two younger men chorused in unison. "These settlers arrived because of the Likud government. They only want to harass us and drive us out."

They looked at me, trying to guess whether I had been taken in by this little act of forgetfulness. The middle-aged man in the corner, working his sewing machine in the shadows,

watched my face and realised I knew his friends were lying. There had, of course, been a long-standing Jewish community in Hebron, living around the building known as the Beit Haddassa. In 1929, Arab rioters massacred 67 Jews not far from this little dilapidated street of 19th-century cut-stone houses. And after 1948, Jordanian troops destroyed what remained of the Jewish quarter.

"There were Jews here a long time ago," the middle-aged man grudgingly acknowledged. "But these Jews are new and they hate us." And here he was right. For on almost every wall and shuttered shop in the street, there were slogans in Hebrew. "This area is Jewish," one said. "Everyone in Hebron will be an Israeli," it was spray-painted

elsewhere, and: "For every Arab dog will come his time." The name of the illegal right-wing party Kach was everywhere. Just as the Palestinian Islamic Hamas movement had begun to scrawl its own name at the other end of the street with an equally unpleasant message: "No Jews here."

We walked down the street past the Beit Haddassa. A few hours earlier, someone had thrown a grenade at the Israeli army checkpoint 200 metres away and six Israeli paratroopers were patrolling in front of us. A teenage Palestinian schoolgirl walked beside us.

"This street used to be alive and now it is a skeleton," she said. "How can there be any feeling of peace when these things are allowed to go on? No, I can't believe in the peace process. If Arafat can't get these settlers out of the centre of our town, how will he get part of Jerusalem?"

We left the girl, but the three settlers who had seen us in the shop were standing further down the street and, as we passed, the shortest one shouted "Al islikhim le'avur" to an Israeli soldier, and pointed at us - "Don't let them pass."

The soldier ignored him and we walked on. But on my return, I asked the young settler why he wanted to keep us from this street in Hebron. He turned away. So I asked the soldier. Why had the settler ordered him not to let us pass? The soldier called the settler over and talked to him for a few seconds.

"He says he can't remember saying that," the soldier replied. Forgetfulness again. I suggested that for a settler mindful of history, this young man had a very short memory. The soldier grinned at me, a little ruefully. At the other end of King David Street, where the grenades had been thrown earlier, an army jeep was parked by a road barrier, a soldier in the front with long, almost shoulder-length hair. "How ya doin'?" he asked. Six months in the States had given him an American-Israeli accent. And he was no friend of the settlers.

"We've got to get out," he said with an easy smile. "We've got no place in Arab towns. Yes, the peace process is very good. We're even going to pull out of a little part of Hebron soon."

This will be news to the Palestinians in the cloth shop, the schoolgirl and the three settlers. For with a shrine holy to both Muslims and Jews, and the tomb of an Israeli mass murderer, Baruch Goldstein, honoured by the Jewish settlers across town in Kiryat Arba, Hebron is not a place to search for trust or compromise in the aftermath of Shimon Peres's declaration of a "peace revolution" before the US Congress.

So how about Jerusalem, I asked the friendly soldier? Would the Palestinians get the east of the city as their capital? "They're not going to get it," the soldier said. "It's out of the question. Arab towns, no problem. Jerusalem never." We shook hands. "Shalom," he said. "And take care - they throw stones." I was going to ask him who "they" were, but I thought I knew.

Enthusiasm wanes for action against Nigeria

STEVE CRAWSHAW

A group of Commonwealth foreign ministers meets in London today to decide on further action to force Nigeria into the democratic fold. But it is unclear if the meeting will be able to agree on much more than a few stern words, while the ministers - who met for a working dinner last night - take the opportunity of some last-minute Christmas shopping in London.

Last month, in the immediate wake of the execution of the writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others, indignant Commonwealth leaders promptly suspended Nigeria from membership. However, tempers have cooled. There now seems to be little enthusiasm for putting Nigeria under pressure.

While riot police in Lagos yesterday used tear gas against demonstrators who had gathered for a banned meeting, demanding democracy, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, the Commonwealth secretary-general, spoke of a two-track approach. On the one hand, he said, Nigeria must be "urged" and "helped" to live up to its democratic commitments under the terms of the Harare declaration of 1993. On the other hand, the foreign ministers would consider ways in which the pressures on the Nigerian military regime could be "sustained and possibly tightened".

Commonwealth countries are deeply divided about what, if anything, to do next. South Africa, which initially took a softly-softly approach on Nige-

ria, is now at the forefront of calls for tougher action, including a possible oil embargo. Britain, another member of the eight-country group, is unwilling to consider an oil embargo or other trade sanctions, arguing that ordinary people will be hurt most. Group members Malaysia and Ghana both abstained at a recent United Nations vote criticising Nigeria.

Some countries fear that the group might be (in the words of one official) "a forerunner of a new Star Chamber" which could take punitive action against any non-democratic member states. Hence the reluctance to move too hard, too fast.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said yesterday that Nigeria's suspension was a "watershed" for the Common-



Emeka Anyaoku: Backs twin-track approach

wealth. Addressing the Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee, he talked of the "universal standards" that the Commonwealth was seeking to impose. But he argued it does not have a unique role to play.

"It can apply pressure, but its position is no different to that of any other international organisation. At the end of the day, change in internal matters will only come about when the government of the country concerned is prepared to respond."

Wreckage reveals 35,000ft death dive of Russian airliner

VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV
Associated Press

Moscow - The airliner that crashed in Russia's Far East earlier this month had gone into a sudden spin at 35,000 feet, leaving the 97 people on board no chance to survive, officials said yesterday.

Rescuers found the wreckage on Monday, 11 days after the Russian plane crashed on 7 December in a remote region north-east of the city of Khabarovsk. They saw a crater and debris of the Tu-154, indicating that the plane hit the ground almost vertically, the Itar-Tass news agency said. Investigators had not yet determined why the pilots lost control of the plane.

More than 50 rescue workers were combing the snowy moun-

tain slope for the remains of victims and gathering fragments. Yesterday they found one of the aircraft's two flight recorders, which could shed light on the cause of the crash.

Experts do not rule out the possibility of an explosion on board, although they believe it unlikely. The more probable cause is failure of ageing equipment, since the Tu-154 had been in service for 19 years.

Officials planned to fly relatives of the victims to the crash site today, but could offer them almost nothing for identification. The blast dug a crater 2 yards deep and 40 yards across.

The debris was discovered accidentally by a helicopter that was not part of the rescue force. Authorities said rescue aircraft had flown over the site four times but failed to spot the

wreckage because of difficult terrain and bad weather.

The Tu-154, carrying 89 passengers and eight crew, went off radar screens while flying from Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, on Sakhalin Island, to Khabarovsk, on the mainland.

The jet belonged to Khabarovsk Airlines, a regional subsidiary of Aeroflot.

It crashed in the remote Bajas mountains about 34 miles west of the Tatar Strait.

The daily *Sopka* quoted aviation experts as saying that only test pilots can sometimes get a big jet out of a spin, but ordinary crew members usually panic and fail to react in the minute or two they have before the plane hits the ground. A sudden spin also would explain why the Tu-154's crew failed to contact traffic controllers.

"What can I get for Amy?"

Madonna
"Something To Remember"

A collection of Madonna's best love songs, including classics like "Oh Father", "Rain", "Take A Bow", "This Used To Be My Playground" and "I'll Remember", together with new tracks including her recent hit "You'll See" and "I Want You" (with Massive Attack).

Enya
"The Memory Of Trees"

Enya's brand new album has been four years in the making and the consensus is that it is her best ever. Haunting, enchanting... extraordinary! (Daily Express). "Like nothing else on Earth" (Q). Includes the hit single "Anywhere Is".

Alanis Morissette
"Jagged Little Pill"

Not only has Alanis lived through some troubled times but she fights back with words that will have you nodding in agreement and smiling at the wit with which she deals the killer blow. Undoubtedly the hottest new star of 1995, her album contains the hits "You Oughta Know" and "Hand In My Pocket".

Seal
"SEAL"

Seal's second album is a worthy follow up to his classic debut album. Contains the hit "Prayer For The Dying", "Kiss From A Rose" (which was featured in *Rainman* Forever and went to Number One in the USA), "Newborn Friend", "I'm Alive" and "Don't Cry". An album for lovers everywhere.

Cher
"It's A Man's World"

One of the most illustrious albums of Cher's lengthy recording career, it includes "Walking In Memphis", "One By One" and classics such as "The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore" and "It's A Man's Man's Man's World". With her unique voice sounding as rich and powerful as ever this new album is a must for Cher fans new and old.

155/100/100

Reformers turn to battle for the Kremlin

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

With the ink barely dry on the millions of ballot papers that have propelled the Communists back into the forefront of Russian politics, reform parties have already turned their minds to perhaps the most critical issue of all - how to avoid a split which could destroy their chances in next year's elections for the presidency.

Supporters of Russia's move to the free market - including the main Western powers - fear that if the pro-reform parties continue to be divided into squabbling factions, no democratic candidate will get into a run-off for the presidency in next June's election, opening the way for a Communist or hard-line nationalist to be elected.

The issue was thrust to the fore yesterday by Grigory Yavlinsky, head of the liberal-leaning Yabloko party, who makes no secret of his desire to occupy the top job. As results in the parliamentary election continued to come in, consolidating the Communists' victory, he called for a broad alliance of reformists "to unite all forces opposed to attempts to restore a totalitarian system", although he made it clear that this should not include Mr Yeltsin.

As he spoke, figures from Sunday's election confirmed that Russia is as polarised as ever between its pro-reform western elites (principally Moscow and St Petersburg) and its anti-reform rural areas, where living standards have plunged since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Communists, who last night were leading with 21.5 per cent, consolidated their hold on the State Duma by winning a stack of seats in single-mandate constituencies. By yesterday evening, they had won 49 of the 225 seats, with 30 left to count. This means they are likely to bag a total of between 120-150 seats, giving them about a third

of the 450-seat legislature, short of overall control.

The divisions among their opponents could scarcely be more critical, at least to those who believe Russia should continue its path to democracy and the free market. "History does repeat itself," Mike McFaul, a leading analyst of Russian politics, said. "It is a very scary thing they are playing with."

Mr McFaul, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Moscow, believes that Mr Yavlinsky, whose party was trailing in fourth place last night, is part of the problem, describing him as a "very dangerous presidential candidate", because he stands little chance of victory but has the capacity to split the pro-reform vote. He predicted Mr Yeltsin would try to "buy him off" with the offer of a deputy prime minister's position.

Mr Yeltsin has said he will announce in February whether he will fight for a second term. His wealthy supporters will probably want him to continue in power, if only to protect them from prosecution over their shady privatisation deals.

He may, however, decide to stand down in favour of an anointed successor - perhaps Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, whose party, Our Home Is Russia, was heading for nearly 10 per cent of the vote.

As the reformers fretted over strategy, the Communist leader, Gennady Zyuganov, was doing his best to dampen down fears in the West that the red flag of repressive Soviet-style Communism is flying high again in Russia. Yesterday, he appealed to foreign leaders to abandon what he called "bioc thinking", a reference to the Cold War. "Bioce" thinking had already resulted in piling up "uncountable arsenals of weapons", he said. "The planet will not endure another lap of the arms race." Instead, there should be a "mechanism for security and co-operation in Europe".

Every word Mr Zyuganov ut-

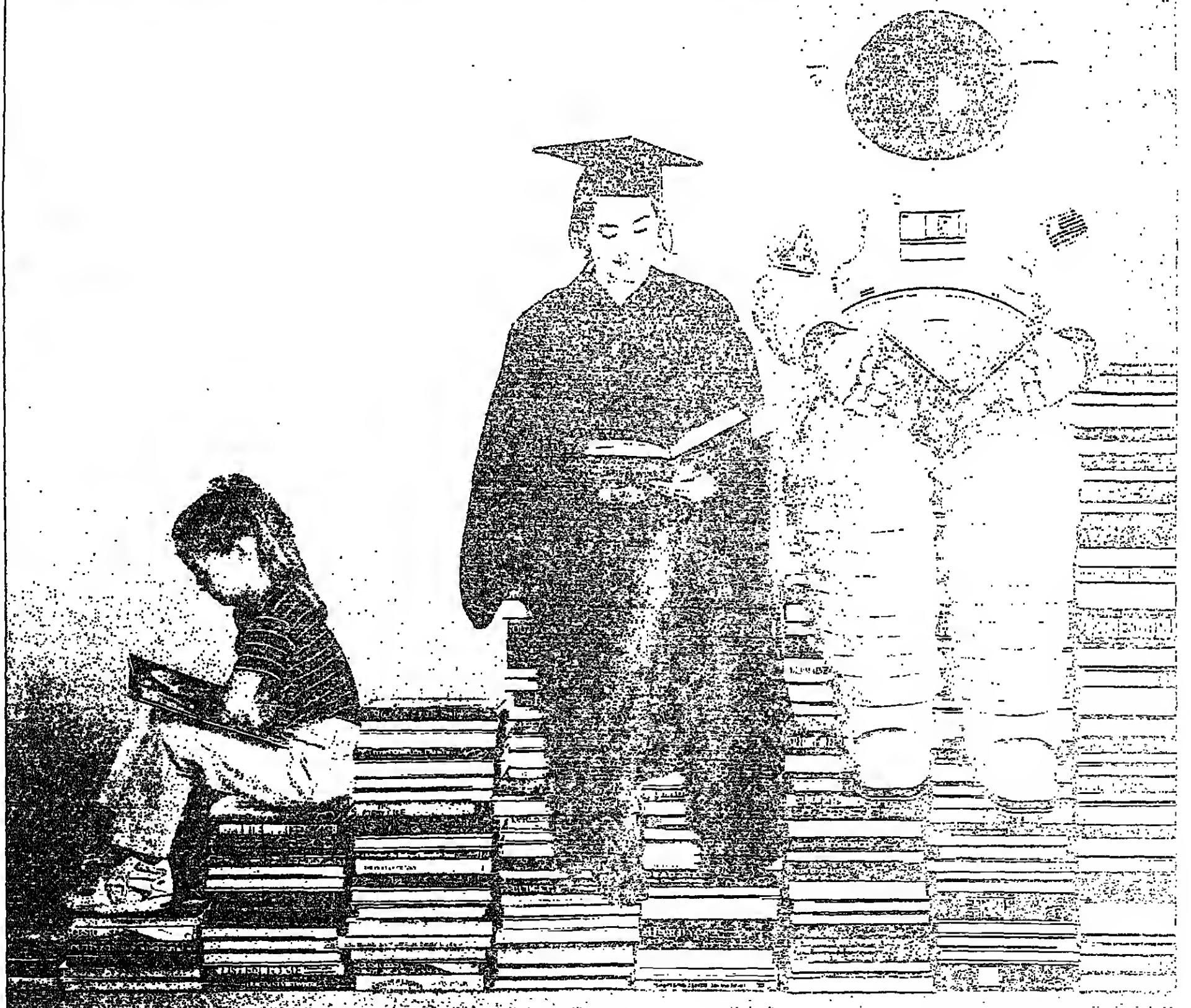
ters is being scrutinised by Western analysts, anxious to know what kind of threat he represents. But the Communist Party has yet to decide on its presidential candidate, and it may not be him. Mr Zyuganov's pro-Western statements have annoyed some hard-line leaders who may dump him in favour of someone with more orthodox credentials.

As matters stand, the Kremlin will not regard the election as an outright defeat, largely because the 40-odd per cent vote for the Communists and nationalists is no larger than it was in 1993. But if the hard left is sophisticated enough to form an alliance, and the reformists continue to bicker, then Russia's fledgling democracy could sink in the stormy seas ahead.



Business as usual: The Austrian Chancellor, Franz Vranitzky (left), whose Social Democratic Party held on to power in Sunday's elections, in talks with President Thomas Klestil in Vienna yesterday

Who knows where a Book Token might lead?



Give a young person a Book Token and you're launching them on a journey of discovery that could take them literally anywhere.

Because what you're really giving them is one of the most exciting and important gifts they'll ever receive: the gift of reading.

And by giving them a Book Token you're giving them the fun and freedom to choose their own direction.

In fact, you're giving them a gift that's just as entertaining as any computer game or video.

Because reading is the one gift that truly exercises their imagination.

And with over a million books currently in print and virtually every bookshop in the country selling and exchanging tokens (over 3000 at the last count!) that's not a bad choice.

So light the blue touchpaper - by giving a Book Token.

Book Tokens can be exchanged for any books, books on tape, or books on CD

Book Tokens
THE GIFT OF READING

IN BRIEF

Indian minister denies N-test plans

New Delhi - India did not plan to conduct a nuclear test, said the Foreign Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, who said that reports to this effect were speculative and baseless. The New York Times, quoting US satellite data, reported last week that Delhi might be preparing a test. *Reuters*

Top Bosnia envoy to step down

Washington - Richard Holbrooke, the hard-driving American diplomat who helped to negotiate peace in Bosnia, told Congress that he would leave his post early next year. A former Wall Street financier, he is expected to return to private industry. State Department officials said he would be succeeded by John Kornblum, a career diplomat. *AP*

'Plotting' Cambodian prince faces exile

Phnom Penh - Prince Norodom Siyavuth, a former Cambodian foreign minister, was released into the custody of his half-brother, King Norodom Sihanouk, pending his expected departure into exile. Prince Siyavuth was arrested a month ago for allegedly plotting to kill Hun Sen, one of the country's co-premiers. *AP*



Garbo's silk knickers left alone

New York - Monogrammed silk knickers worn by Greta Garbo were left alone with Freddie March in a scene from a 1935 production of *Love and Learning*, offered by the estate of a former lover, Knicker B. For a bid to sell at an auction of Hollywood costumes and the "Garbo" collection. The top bid of \$6,500 (£4,300) was far below a price estimate of \$10,000 to \$15,000. *AP*

Captain suspected of immigrant scam

Syracuse - The captain and five crewmen of a Greek cargo ship were detained on suspicion of running illegal immigrants to Italy after the vessel ran aground off Sicily. *Reuters*

Colombo wages war of the pensions

Colombo - In an effort to starve Tamil rebels of funds, the Sri Lankan government will withhold salaries of state employees in self-administered territories. Thousands of pensioners and government workers will go without their money unless they can cross into government-controlled areas to collect it. *AP*

Nato's new man makes peace pledge

Brussels - Javier Solana, the former Spanish foreign minister, became NATO's new secretary-general and promised to work for peace and stability in the alliance's peace mission in Bosnia, where NATO takes over from the UN today. *AP*

China bans date with profitable returns

Peking - China has banned the use of 1997 as a trademark, and registered 1997 trademarks for tobacco and other goods. It also banned the use of these four numbers, as it is the year of the Chinese New Year. *Reuters*

131 feared dead in Angola air crash

Luanda - A Conquistador airliner carrying 150 people crashed in Angola. At least 131 people were killed. *Reuters*

international

Crazy monument to a broken, cheated Sioux nation

DAN KOHN ANALYSIS

Crazy Horse Mountain, South Dakota — What is it about the Black Hills that compels people to carve them into monuments? Maybe it's the quality of the granite, maybe the ravishing vistas that guarantee a perfect frame for the sculptor's handiwork — or maybe it's simply the doctrine that a Big Country should have Big Art, which explains why, for more than half a century now, the heads of George, Thomas, Abe and Teddy have been glowing from Mount Rushmore.

But one day even the four presidents will be but figurines compared to Crazy Horse. Since 1947, an eccentric Polish-American sculptor and his descendants have been busy 30 miles away at what was once known as Thunderhead Mountain. When the project is complete (the year 2050 is the guessimate) the mightiest of all Sioux warriors will burst from the living rock astride a galloping horse, his hair streaming in the wind, crowned by a single feather alone measuring 44 feet in length.

And who cannot be impressed by this endeavour, this "ruin in reverse" epic to the point of lunacy? The Black Hills, I have been told, are visible in a satellite picture of the earth, meaning that one day Crazy Horse will probably become the first human shape discernible to the naked eye of the passing cosmonaut. Already, 8.5 million tons of rock have

been removed but they've barely started on his lips. The complete face will not be ready until June 1998 — and that is ahead of schedule, thanks to a string of mild winters. Still more impressive, when I was there last week, some of the sons and heirs of Korczak Ziolkowski were up on the mountaintop, carving and drilling, despite a temperature of minus 12C or less.

But something nags. Yes, Ziolkowski, who died in 1982, had only \$174 (£113) in his pocket when he took up the invitation of a Sioux chief to start his venture. Repeatedly he turned down offers of federal help, insisting that it the public wanted to honour so great a hero, individuals and not the government should pay. Yet for all its hugeness, this rendering of the Sioux leader who annihilated General Custer and the Seventh Cavalry at the battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876 is, at best, a gigantic consolation prize; at worst, a condescending act of atonement on the part of a white race that will never give back to the Indian what really matters — his land.

When it is finished Ziolkowski's Crazy Horse tableau will be 563ft tall and 641ft long. The head alone is as large as those of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt on Mount Rushmore combined. But many of the seven tribes and 70,000 people of the Great Sioux Nation would exchange a hundred monuments for return of just



Stoney faced: Work on Crazy Horse in Dakota. The finished statue (modelled right) — circa 2050 — will be 563ft tall and 641ft long. After 48 years, 8.5 million tons of rock have been removed

part of their sacred Black Hills.

Tim Giago, born on the Sioux reservation of Pine Ridge and now publisher of *Indian Country Today*, the largest Indian newspaper in the US, recounted

to me the wretched tale. For the Sioux the Black Hills, ceded in 1868 by the US government in 1868 only to be seized back when gold was discovered there six years later, are the land from

which their ancestors sprang. "The statue of Crazy Horse is a desecration, just like Mount Rushmore was a defilement. And who is it honouring a great chief or the Ziolkowskis?"



The Sioux refused. Today the \$105m is worth with interest \$350m, but still they refuse. "We lost 7 million acres," Mr Giago says. "All we are asking for back is 1.3 million acres."

Instead the Sioux stand to lose still more. If Congress has its way, funding for the Bureau of Indian Affairs — the biggest employer of American Indians — will be reduced by 10 per cent, or \$168m next year, part of the Republican effort to balance the budget. Let them eat blackjack, poker and slots, runs the unspoken reasoning, fuelled by reports that some Indian tribes are making a fortune out of reservation gambling. If so, why is Shannock County in South Dakota, where Pine Ridge is to be found and where a makeshift casino rears from the endless prairie, still the poorest county in the entire USA?

I returned from Crazy Horse Mountain to Rapid City, jumping-off point of a visit to the

Black Hills. Wandering down a dark Main Street, I stopped at a shop displaying panoramic photographs of the Black Hills, as well as one taken in 1948 of gnarled Sioux elders, said to have been at the Little Big Horn battle. Just then a man shambled over to me, wrapped against the biting cold. He was at least 50, his black ponytail streaked with grey, unmistakably Indian. He struck up a conversation, before pointing to one of the leaders: "My grandfather, Little Eagle." Well — who knows. But there was no ambiguity about his next remark: "Gotta a dollar, just to buy a drink?" Such has been the descent of the American Indian: from Crazy Horse and the freedom of the plains, to dingy reservations and drunks on the sidewalks of Rapid City. These are facts not even the biggest statue can change.

Rupert Cornwell

Win £10,000 of Hi-Fi, VCRs and more with the INDEPENDENT

We would like to give you some sound advice — enter our Aiwa prize draw and you could end up with the hi-fi system of your dreams. We have £10,000 of Aiwa technology to be won, including powerful mid-hi-fi systems, VCRs and personal CD players, all of which are stylish and packed with features. There are five prize packages plus 23 runners-up prizes. They comprise:

- First prize**
Z-D9300M Mid-hi-Fi System
LCX-500 Micro Hi-Fi System
HV-FX77 VCR
XP-R600 Personal CD Player
- Second prize**
NSX-999 Mini Hi-Fi System
HS-RV348 Personal Stereo Tape Model
HV-FX77 VCR
- Third prize**
LCX-500 Micro Hi-Fi System
HS-RV348 Personal Stereo Tape Model
HV-FX77 VCR
- Fourth prize**
LCX-500 Micro Hi-Fi System
HV-FX77 VCR
- Fifth prize**
LCX-500 Micro Hi-Fi System
XP-R600 Personal CD Player
- Runners-up**
LCX-500 Micro Hi-Fi System

These great Aiwa prizes take home entertainment to new heights of enjoyment. Here is a brief description of each component prize.

The Z-D9300M Mid-hi-Fi System incorporates a Dolby Pro Logic speaker system and 5-CD auto changer. It has five speakers with ample power output, 3-band

tuner, graphic equaliser, double auto-reverse cassette deck, and belt-drive automatic turntable.

The compact size of the LCX-500 Micro Hi-Fi System belies the quality of its sound. This versatile system comprises 10W+10W amplifier, 3-band tuner, top-loading CD player, cassette deck and speakers.

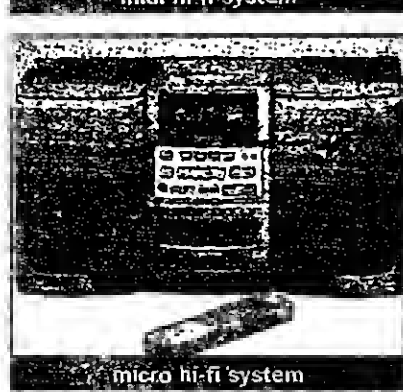
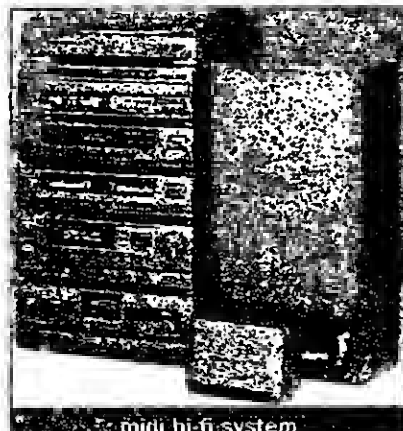
The HV-FX77 VCR is packed with features that make recording and playing so simple that even adults can do it. It has four heads for increased picture clarity, VideoPlus for ease of programming and a one-moment, six-event timer programme.

For music on the move, the lightweight XP-R600 Personal CD Player offers great CD sound plus a digital synthesiser tuner with 30 pre-set bands.

The NSX-999 Mini Hi-Fi System is built around a powerful 150W+150W amplifier linked to a tuner, 3-CD auto changer CD player, and a double auto-reverse cassette deck. The speaker system features 3-way bass reflex.

The HS-RV348 Personal Stereo Tape Model offers full remote control with a digital tuner and one-key joystick operation.

How To Enter: To be in with a chance of winning one of the prize packages listed left, you must collect four differently numbered tokens from the seven that we are printing. Today we are printing token four and the entry form. Fill in the entry form and send it, along with your four differently numbered tokens, to the address shown. Rules are as previously published. The entry form will be reprinted on Saturday.



Send your completed entry form, along with 4 differently numbered tokens, to: Independent, Aiwa Prize Draw, P.O. Box 250, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 1TU. Closing date: 16 January 1996.

NAME:
ADDRESS:
POSTCODE:
HOME TELEPHONE NO.:
WORK TELEPHONE NO.:
DATE OF BIRTH:

Hopes raised of end to US budget deadlock

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

After three days of stalemate, rancour and another partial government shutdown, President Bill Clinton and Republican leaders in Congress arranged a meeting last night which offered hope of some movement in their intractable wrangle over the budget.

Before the talks, both sides were playing down speculation of an important breakthrough on the issue at the heart of the dispute: a strategy to reach a balanced federal budget within seven years. But the session might at last produce a formula for a return to work by the 260,000 government workers sent home this week after the fast temporary spending bill expired on Friday.

According to Mr Clinton's spokesman, Mike McCurry, the discussions with Bob Dole, the Senate Republican leader, and Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, would be "without precondition," an oblique way of saying that on the two main bones of contention — cuts in Medicare and Medicaid health

care schemes and the \$245bn (£160bn) tax cut sought by Republicans — the White House and Congress remain as far apart as ever. Indeed, they still cannot even agree on the economic forecasts to use as a basis for negotiation.

With the impasse threatening to drag on into the New Year, the best chance of breaking the deadlock probably lies in a big shake-out in the financial markets, driving stocks down and interest rates sharply higher as investors realise that the assumption of a budget deal that had underpinned the recent run-up on Wall Street might be wrong.

But Monday's 100-point fall in the Dow made little outward impression on Mr Clinton yesterday. Signing his veto to another of the 13 appropriations bills for the 1996 budget sent him by Congress, the President declared that there "will always be such changes in a vibrant market economy". A clearer gauge was due later yesterday, as the Federal Reserve met to consider a cut in short-term interest rates.

In another sign of business

care schemes and the \$245bn (£160bn) tax cut sought by Republicans — the White House and Congress remain as far apart as ever. Indeed, they still cannot even agree on the economic forecasts to use as a basis for negotiation.

care schemes and the \$245bn (£160bn) tax cut sought by Republicans — the White House and Congress remain as far apart as ever. Indeed, they still cannot even agree on the economic forecasts to use as a basis for negotiation.

care schemes and the \$245bn (£160bn) tax cut sought by Republicans — the White House and Congress remain as far apart as ever. Indeed, they still cannot even agree on the economic forecasts to use as a basis for negotiation.

care schemes and the \$245bn (£160bn) tax cut sought by Republicans — the White House and Congress remain as far apart as ever. Indeed, they still cannot even agree on the economic forecasts to use as a basis for negotiation.

care schemes and the \$245bn (£160bn) tax cut sought by Republicans — the White House and Congress remain as far apart as ever. Indeed, they still cannot even agree on the economic forecasts to use as a basis for negotiation.

care schemes and the \$245bn (£160bn) tax cut sought by Republicans — the White House and Congress remain as far apart as ever. Indeed, they still cannot even agree on the economic forecasts to use as a basis for negotiation.

care schemes and the \$245bn (£160bn) tax cut sought by Republicans — the White House and Congress remain as far apart as ever. Indeed, they still cannot even agree on the economic forecasts to use as a basis for negotiation.

French unions left in disarray

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

With the return to work now in full swing across France, members of France's oldest union, the CGT, led off another big street protest through central Paris last night in a final — and largely to-keo — attempt to have the government's welfare reform plan withdrawn. The abolition of the plan, formulated by the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, is the single demand of the trade unions that has not been granted after more than three weeks of strikes and protests.

But even as the CGT train drivers, who formed the backbone of the past month's strikes, lined up noisily in the Place de la République, the power of the

unions overall seemed little enhanced. Although they can claim to have supported almost every reform proposed by Mr Juppé, except for the basic structural change in how the health and welfare system is administered, they have emerged no more united than when the dispute began.

Yesterday's march, for instance, was sponsored only by the overtly left-wing CGT, not by the Force Ouvrière which had jointly supported all the previous protests. Moreover, the bombastic leader of the FO, Marc Blondel, was suddenly quiet, working on his union's preparations for tomorrow's "social summit" with Mr Juppé and government ministers.

Mr Blondel's leadership of

the protests — at least in media terms — also seems to have brought him no benefit. Yesterday, the head of the FO organisation in the Paris region, Jacques Maire, announced that he would challenge Mr Blondel at the union's national congress in February.

In giving reasons for his decision, Mr Maire showed how difficult it is for trade unions to collaborate effectively in France for any length of time. He said that the FO risked having its "independence compromised by the place occupied by a political sect, the [extreme-left] Workers' Party", and he objected to the fact that Mr Blondel had made common cause with the FO's old enemy, the CGT.

The leader of the third, and

biggest, union — the CFDT — Nicole Notat, is in trouble with her executive for having initially suggested that the Juppé plan might have positive aspects. She has periodically called for an end to the stoppages and a start to talks.

The discord in the unions, even after a highly effective protest, is evidence of how little the unions had initially sought to fight the government and how far the dispute was genuinely thrust upon them by the strength of grassroots opinion in the public sector.

Nor has the return to work been as swift or wholehearted as many had expected. The national rail network was still working only about 50 per cent yesterday.

SOME INSURANCE QUOTES ARE SO HIGH, YOU'D THINK THEY DIDN'T WANT YOUR BUSINESS. [THEY DON'T.]

Surprisingly enough, there are many reasons why an insurance company won't insure you.

Whether you're looking for household or car insurance; if you live in the wrong area, if you've had a break-in or accident previously, or if you're simply the wrong age, you're likely to end up with a policy at an inflated price.

However, at Swinton, we have access to a wide range of policies, so whatever your circumstances, we're more likely to find a policy that's right for you and your pocket.

For competitive household or car insurance, freephone Swinton or contact your local branch. You'll soon be reassured that at least one company wants your business. (We do.)

SWINTON

0500 450 451
0800 600 700

BETWEEN 9AM-5PM MON-SAT. 9AM-12PM SUN. OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL BRANCH.

0500 450 451

Lights go back on as Nato takes command

SUSAN LINNIE
Associated Press

Sarajevo — More Nato troops and equipment poured into Bosnia yesterday as alliance commanders prepared to take over formal command of peace enforcement from the UN peace-keeping mission.

Six US cargo planes bringing troops and food supplies arrived at Tuzla, in northern Bosnia, where 20,000 American troops will be headquartered. Another aircraft brought an advance party of the 1,500 Russian peace-keepers, to be based in the American sector.

In Sarajevo, citizens rejoiced as warm light flooded the city, after the German ambassador, Johannes Presinger, threw the switch on a new power line mostly financed by Germany.

"We've come to help them to implement their agreement," Gen Walker said. "We offer the chance of something that everybody wants — peace."

UN forces in Bosnia, numbering 24,000 at their peak, were at best able to help deliver humanitarian aid. At worst, they were harassed, shot at, taken hostage and accused of failing to protect Bosnian civilians from the tortures of almost four years of war that have left 200,000 dead or missing and more than 2 million homeless.

"I do not under-estimate the challenge, but I-for has been given the tools to do the job," Gen Walker said. He added that Bosnian people, evenhandedly to help create the environment in which the reconstruction of this country can take place.

Admiral Leighton Smith, the American commander of the Nato mission, will join Gen Walker at today's handover ceremony. Many of the UN troops from Nato countries will remain in Bosnia, swapping their blue berets for camouflage.

More US army engineers arrived in Croatia to prepare construction of a pontoon bridge across the Sava River to Bosnia. Once that is established, troops and equipment can move overland to Tuzla.

Despite heavy snow, a train with 67 engineers arrived in Zupanja, on the Croatian-Bosnian border. It also carried 40 vehicles and equipment. Four other trains were moving toward Zupanja and nearby Slavonki Brod, a Nato spokesman said in Zagreb.

Trying to make up for weather-related delays, a US Air Force advance team landed at Ferihegy airport in Budapest yesterday to establish landing facilities in the Hungarian capital. Fog has slowed landings of men and equipment at Tuzla, in southern Hungary, where the US military is setting up a supply base for Bosnia-bound American troops.

Belgrade — General Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb army commander and a suspected war criminal, ranks high in favour in Serbia, according to a poll published yesterday, AP reports.

Gen Mladic, twice indicted for genocide by the UN tribunal dealing with war crimes in former Yugoslavia, trails only behind Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, according to the popularity poll, conducted by the Belgrade-based Institute of Social Sciences.



General Walker: "We have the tools for the job"

The German Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, was supposed to inaugurate the new source of electricity, which was scarce throughout the war, but was unable to land on account of fog and snow at the airport. Sarajevans already refer to the electricity as "Kinkelpower".

This is great — look at those lights, white, yellow, white, yellow," said Jasna Miletovic, 41, as she drove her car past Bosnian Serb positions less than 100 yards away. "This now looks like real peace."

Nato formally takes over peace-keeping duties from the UN at a ceremony in Sarajevo today. Major-General Sir Michael Walker, commander of Nato's Rapid Reaction Corps, which is helping to co-ordinate the transfer of command, landed in Sarajevo yesterday.

Unlike the lightly-armed UN peace-keepers who faced often insurmountable odds as war raged around it, the 60,000 Nato-led force (I-For) has a peace plan signed by all the warring sides behind it.



Gently does it: Bosnian army soldier removing a mine in an exercise north of Tuzla

Photograph: Corinne Dufka/Reuters



As Christmas approaches, the Independent is asking readers to support four charities working to help child victims of the wars in former Yugoslavia. Please make your cheques or postal orders payable to the charity of your choice and send it with the coupon below.

INDEPENDENT CHILDREN OF WAR APPEAL

I would like to make a donation to help children in former Yugoslavia. I enclose a cheque/postal order/CAV/CAF card for £..... made payable to one of the following charities.

- ☐ Child Advocacy International
☐ British Red Cross
☐ Former Yugoslavia Appeal
☐ War Child
☐ Save the Children

(please tick as appropriate)

Signature

Date

Please post your donation(s) to:

The Independent Children of War Appeal,

c/o the Independent, PO

Box 4011, London E14 5BB

THANK YOU

Computers Made Simple! AT TOYS'R'US FAMILY MULTIMEDIA CENTRES

COMPAQ PRESARIO 7106
8Mb COMPAQ MULTIMEDIA PC
£1199 inc VAT!

NOW ONLY £1199 inc VAT
BUY NOW PAY NEXT JUNE!
(20% deposit required)

£1020.43 EX VAT

- ▲ State-of-the-art Multimedia PC
- ▲ Pre-loaded with 11 leading software titles including Compton's Encyclopaedia, Windows '95, Navell PerfectWorks, MS Money, Maxis Sim City Classics
- ▲ Quad Speed CD-ROM drive
- ▲ 486 DX4-100 Processor
- ▲ 420 Mb Hard Disk
- ▲ 8 Mb RAM expandable to 128 Mb

Microsoft ENCARTA 96
World English Edition developed specially for the UK with extensive UK content
ONLY £37.97 inc VAT
Ex VAT £32.31

CD ROM TRIPLE PACK ONLY £24.99

CD ROM TRIPLE PACK ONLY £29.99

ALICE IN WONDERLAND, JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH, TREASURE ISLAND

MATHS, SPELLING, PAINT & CREATE

FUJITSU ICL PCTV NEW! COMPAQ PRESARIO 5520 IBM APTIVA 932

BUY NOW PAY NEXT JUNE!
£1097.02 EX VAT

BUY NOW PAY NEXT JUNE!
£1428.94 EX VAT

BUY NOW PAY NEXT JUNE!
£1488.51 EX VAT

PLUS OVER 400 PC/CD-ROM SOFTWARE TITLES IN ALL STORES!

TOYS'R'US FAMILY MULTIMEDIA CENTRES

▲ FRIENDLY SIMPLE ADVICE
▲ 8 MEGABYTES OF RAM ON ALL MACHINES
▲ FREE 12 MONTH IN-HOME SERVICING
▲ SIMPLY PLUG IN TO PLAY AND LEARN!

▲ FUTURE-PROOF TO ENABLE ALL CURRENT HOME SOFTWARE TO RUN WITHOUT EXPENSIVE UPGRADES
▲ EASY PAYMENT TERMS AVAILABLE
▲ HOME INSTALLATION AVAILABLE

TELEPHONE HELPLINE

ALL OUR MACHINES HAVE 8 MEGABYTES OF RAM

ALL STORES OPEN 9-10pm MON-SAT

Credit Example: Second £1199 Compaq £24.125, then after 6 months you can settle the balance of £950 at 0% APR. If you decide not to settle, interest will be charged on the outstanding balance at 12% APR variable. Monthly payment £25. Total amount payable £1199.

WE'LL MATCH ANY ADVERTISED PRICE

ALL STORES OPEN 9-10pm MON-SAT 9-11pm Xmas Eve 10-11pm Xmas Eve 11-12pm

*** TOYS'R'US will match any retailer's nationally advertised price within 7 days of the advertisement appearing. We will match the price either at the time of purchase or within 7 days of purchase provided you have your original receipt. Price matching applies provided the other retailer has stock locally at the time of purchase. Toys'R'US coupons cannot be used in addition to price matching. Direct sales, Telestore and Mail Order offers are excluded.**

INDEPENDENT Special Reports Diary 1996
FAX-U-BACK 0336 416 295

For a list of forthcoming Independent Special Reports, please fax the number above and press "start" when connected. Your fax machine will then print out our diary.

Calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate, and 49p per minute at all other times.

Commuter services in the South-east between London and Maidstone, Brighton, Eastbourne, Portsmouth, Bournemouth and Gatwick Airport. Revenue £157m in 1994-95. Opra! received preliminary bids last week. Final bids likely in March 1996.

Generation Why
by Tony Reeve and Steve Way

WOW, NICKI! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I'M NOT NICKI, I'M CINDERELLA...

PANTOLAND
PUSS IN BOOT-CAMP

AND YOUR NAME'S NOT MATT, IT'S BUTTONS.

BUTTONS. WHY?

BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT YOU GET PAID AROUND HERE. THERE'S NO MINIMUM WAGE...

THAT'S NOT FAIR

NO, THAT'S WORKFARE.

PLANNED OBEDIENCE

INDEPENDENT

FOUNDED 1986

ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E14 6DL
TELEPHONE 0171-298 2000/0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-293 2435/0171-345 2435

EDITOR: Charles Wilson

DEPUTY EDITOR: Martin Jacques MANAGING EDITOR: Colin Hughes
SECTION TWO EDITOR: Charles Leadbeater SATURDAY EDITOR: David Robson
EXECUTIVE NEWS EDITOR: Michael Williams ASSISTANT EDITOR: Simon Kelner

NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING PLC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Liam Healy (Chairman) Sir Gordon Borrie Ben Bradlee Juan Luis Cebrian Brendan Hopkins
David Montgomery Javier Diaz de Polanco Cornel Riklin Andreas Whittam Smith
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR: Jeremy Reed

Locked into a cycle of misery

The filthy conditions, poor staffing and austere regime revealed yesterday at Holloway prison is the story of yet another jail that has been allowed to descend into Victorian squalor. A prison that was once a proud example of penal reform has been allowed to deteriorate because of staff shortages, financial cutbacks, a security clamp-down, a reduction in educational and recreational programmes and a policy of locking inmates in their cells for longer periods.

Let us not forget that many of the women in Holloway are not there for particularly serious offences. A number were incarcerated after failing to pay a fine for not having a television licence. Many are on remand and have not been found guilty of any offence. In short, neither the criminality of the women, nor indeed the risk of escape, warranted a regime in Holloway under which, according to the board of prison visitors, many women are locked in their cells for 23 hours a day.

But the Holloway crisis raises broader issues beyond the particular prison. Like the Strangeways riot in 1989, it goes to the heart of current penal policy. Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, has some serious questions to answer.

The appalling conditions at Holloway – so had the Chief Inspector of Prisons cut short his inspection to make known his findings – could easily be reproduced elsewhere in the country because of changes in government policy. As a result, only an optimist could say that Holloway will prove to be exceptional in the coming years.

At the Conservative Party conference in October, the Home Secretary announced measures designed to send prisoners to jail for longer. He proposes that second-time violent and sex offend-

ers should get life and prisoners should enjoy reduced remission. These initiatives could increase the population in jail by up to 20,000 in two years.

Then there are the cuts in prison service funding announced in last month's Budget – more than 10 per cent over three years. And staff are now expected to place greater emphasis on security, following Sir John Latham's report, published in October, into escapes from Whitemoor and Parkhurst prisons. As a result, prison officers are going to find themselves more thinly stretched. Already, as a result of shrinking budgets, record numbers of prisoners and political demands for tougher regimes, governors are cutting back on work, welfare and education programmes and home visits.

Put these developments together and you could get the sort of deterioration in prison conditions that General Sir David Ramsbotham has described at Holloway.

The danger is that the Government will ignore a deterioration that could leave the prison system vulnerable to disturbances on a Strangeways scale. We now know that Holloway's board of prison visitors alerted ministers to what was going on a number of times over the past two years. The Government had, it should be said in mitigation, recently released additional funds to improve conditions. But ministers were clearly prepared to let inmates live for some time in inadequate circumstances.

The governor of Holloway must explain the management failures that took place in her establishment. But Michael Howard must also tell us, as he plans an expanded prison population, cuts in prison funding and tougher, longer sentences, how he can ensure that Holloway's misery will not be repeated across the country.

Mr Murdoch goes over the top

Rugby league – you know, the one Will Carling doesn't play – is discovering the price of selling its soul to Rupert Murdoch. In exchange for an £87m investment in a new Super League, Mr Murdoch's company News Corporation will have a veto over transfers by the top players. Imagine if a media magnate had this kind of power on the football field: Stan Collymore's £8.5m transfer from Nottingham Forest to Liverpool could have been blocked by a mere nod from Mr M. Thanks to a clause in the contracts signed by the Super League's top players, this may well happen in rugby league.

Still, all's fair in love, war and commerce. These top players are getting large sums of money for signing their independence away. And News Corporation is pouring millions of pounds into rugby league clubs which were heading for broke. To the dismay of the local communities who turned out to support their league teams whatever the weather, the game is being changed to suit the living-room rather than the grandstand. But as rugby league can no longer support itself on the takings from the turnstile, it is inevitable that the broadcast media should get involved with the future of the sport.

The big problem with the Super League deal is not the link between sport and business – it is Rupert Murdoch. News Corporation is fast developing a monopoly on international sports broadcasting. This allows him to bid up the price viewers pay to watch sport on TV. But it also gives him considerable power over the sports he broadcasts. Ideally, rugby league clubs

should have been able to choose between several competing broadcast companies, negotiating their terms and preserving their control over the game. Instead, they were faced with a single "take it or leave it" Murdoch deal, the terms of which are only just starting to become clear.

Rupert Murdoch has crossed the boundary between controlling the broadcast and controlling the sport itself. At least with football, Mr Murdoch still has to negotiate with the Football Association: the media mogul cannot make the final decision. The contracts for top players in the Super League demonstrate just how much power Mr Murdoch wants over the day to day running of the sport. No one mentioned this when the deal was announced in March. How much more is there still to be revealed?

In his defence, Mr Murdoch might argue that his intervention will improve competition on the field. Right now Wigan are far and away the best team in the league. If Mr Murdoch uses his veto to stop good players flocking to Wigan, other clubs might improve. More evenly matched teams will make better rugby league. But there are better ways to achieve this than handing over power to a multinational.

Power over broadcasting should remain separate and distinct from power over sport. The extent of Mr Murdoch's power over rugby league is unacceptable. One fears for the future of sport should this principle be extended to other games, as probably will be the case. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission should watch out – this is not in the public interest.

Nicked at the cutting edge of bourgeois life

Today's short story has been made possible with funds from the Home Office, though they don't know this yet. Thanks!



MILES KINGSTON

When the police declare an amnesty on people carrying knives, it is not just the schoolchildren of the nation they are appealing to, our dear little schoolchildren armed to the teeth with guns, knives, cutlasses and machetes. Nor is it merely to the criminal classes who sally forth festooned with daggers, confident in the knowledge that they will not meet a policeman carrying so much as a penknife. No, it is also the dear old middle-class police are trying to reach, middle-class households such as those run by Edward and Ursula...

"Knife-sharpening baffles me," said Edward, waving a kitchen knife and a steel at his wife, Ursula. "On Christmas Day my father used to get out a steel like this and a carving knife like this and he used to stroke one gently against the other in a manner reminiscent of Yehudi Menuhin playing the violin until magically the knife was so sharp that you could shave with it."

"How do you know?" said Ursula. "Did he ever shave with it?"

"He used to shave the turkey with

it," said Edward, nostalgically. "Any excrement lumps or remains of feathers he would remove with a gentle sweep of the knife. He once demonstrated that he could cut a piece of paper in half in mid-air, as it fell, just by slashing it with his freshly sharpened knife. Shall I show you?"

"No, never mind," said Ursula. "Just sharpen that kitchen knife. That's all I need."

"I don't think I'll ever get it sharp," said Edward. "It's just going to join that ever-growing pile of blunt knives we never use."

It was true. At the back of the kitchen drawer there had accumulated a stack of knives which had started out as gleaming little French knives or good old English knives or nice serrated bread knives, all of which had got blunter and blunter, especially when Edward tried to sharpen them. They were left undis-

turbed there, not because anyone thought they would come in useful again, but because nobody dared put their hand down the back of the drawer in case they got cut, though the danger was minimal.

"I thought you were going to throw those away?" said Ursula.

"It's not that easy to throw away knives," said Edward. "It's like throwing away glass. It becomes a hazard for someone else."

"Oh, for heaven's sake, just wrap them all up and throw them away! Or ... or ... join the amnesty!"

"The what?"

"They said on the news this morning that there's an amnesty for knives. You just go to the nearest police station and hand your knives in. No questions asked. You just pop them in a box."

"Yes, but that's for fighting knives. That's for people who carry knives and go around hoping to stich up other people, or rather, to unstick them. It's not for people who go round carrying knives hoping to get a chance to slice some bread!"

"Look, they will accept any kind of knife! They'll take our lot! You yourself said it was getting dangerous, last time you cut your finger..."

"Yes, but..."

Half an hour later Edward had



Diana spends Christmas with her real friends

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Not a question of 'good' and 'bad' teachers

From Mr John Humberstone
Sir: Chris Woodhead's article ("Schools need much more than money", 16 December) is a demonstration of why so many teachers find his performance as Chief Inspector of Schools in the "unsatisfactory" department.

To concentrate on one issue, that of class size, his statement "Good teachers may be able to teach even better when they have 20 children rather than 30 in their class, but there is absolutely no reason to believe that it is the size of class that makes a bad teacher bad" is absurdly absolute.

For a start, it encourages the view that there are "good" teachers and "bad" teachers, when most of us would happily admit to being somewhere in between, and to find it easier to teach 30 literate, numerate, well-motivated students than 20 who are semi-literate and disaffected.

Second, the debate about class size does not exist in an academic vacuum. We are talking at a time when class size has increased, particularly in the last year, after the Government's refusal to fund the pay award for teachers. There has been a 28 per cent increase in classes of more than 30 between 1994 and 1995 in England, and the number of students taught in classes of more than 40 has increased from 14,057 to 18,223 in

the same period (source: *Hansard* 24 October, 1995).

Schools have usually managed to put the disadvantaged and disaffected into small groups. Perhaps the real significance of these figures is not that the brightest may have to become used to being taught in groups of 40, but that the least able may not be able to be taught in groups of 20. Yours faithfully, JOHN HUMBERSTONE, Kirby-in-Furness, Cumbria 18 December

From Mr David Morgan
Sir: That schools need more money is not in dispute. What requires constant re-affirmation is that they do need much more money, and the Chief Inspector does our schools a disservice in weakening the argument for this.

Granted that the key ingredient of an effective education is good teaching, we should be aiming to maximise its impact by providing the conditions needed by the good teacher to do the job properly – adequate premises, a sufficient supply of textbooks and, above all, a reasonable pupil-teacher ratio. We are now in the run-up to the general election, with both major parties seemingly committed to tight control of government spending. With so many worthy areas of

public provision starved of funds, the champions of education should speak with one voice. Governments need no help in finding excuses for skimping on education. Yours faithfully, DAVID MORGAN, Abingdon, Oxfordshire 17 December

The writer is a school governor.

From Mrs Cheryl Johnston
Sir: For too long I have read of the failings of teachers. We have become the target of both the major parties. I have been a teacher since 1969 in both primary and secondary schools. For the most part, we work hard, caring, dedicated professionals. I am not saying that we are some weak teachers, but are there not also weak doctors, lawyers, bank clerks, painters, decorators and even journalists? Yours faithfully, CHERYL JOHNSTON, Felixstowe, Suffolk 14 December

From Mr C. G. Jermy
Sir: What about trendy inspectors? In the Fifties, Sixties, Seventies and possibly longer, many experienced, well-qualified, devoted but traditional teachers knew who the enemy was. Yours faithfully, C. G. JERMY, London, N12

Labour intensive

From Mr Jeff Rooker, MP
Sir: Having not seen BBC2's series about the Labour Party, *The Wilderness Years* ("Welcome back from the wilderness", 19 December), I remain at a loss as to the purpose of the enterprise. Much of what I have read in the press must have something to do with the fact that not everyone invited to appear was prepared to do so, even though the producers found this difficult to understand.

I am amazed that the lure of a camera is so powerful that it per-

suades senior Labour Party members in January/March this year to participate, knowing it would be broadcast in the run-up to a general election. What is the game?

We do not have to keep talking about a recent distressing period of history to put across the case that we have learnt the lessons from that period. At least I hope not.

Yours, JEFF ROOKER, MP for Birmingham Perry Barr (Lab), House of Commons London, SW1

The taxman triumphant

From Mr Ian Barlow
Sir: Richard Jones and his staff at the Large Groups office of the Inland Revenue should be congratulated for improving the Revenue's appreciation of the way business operates ("The taxman has his sights on a clear picture", 18 December), but his "customers" should be under no illusions of the implications of this progress.

The key is in Mr Jones' phrase "better awareness of what they (ie businesses) are doing". The one-stop shop approach of the Large Groups Office, where tax matters previously handled by up to 20 separate offices are gathered under one roof, allows more vigorous examination of large companies' tax affairs. This country's legislature offers little protection to companies whose affairs come under close scrutiny by the Revenue – examinations which can encompass transactions going back five, 10 or 20 years.

Corporates can therefore expect to negotiate in an increasingly fierce environment as the Revenue increases its expertise. There are two issues arising. First, UK plc needs to ensure its tax affairs are watertight. Second, there is as yet no retrospective time limit on the Revenue's powers to examine a company's transactions – generally a limit of three years from the date a tax return is filed is in place in the US, for example.

Increased understanding on both sides deserves encouragement, however, recent developments and the wide-ranging powers currently enjoyed by the Revenue, lead me to suspect the odds may be moving inexorably in its favour. Yours faithfully, IAN BARLOW, UK Head of Tax KPMG 18 December

Jonah and the Tooth Fairy

From Mr R. Kimber
Sir: Your front-page story (18 December) regarding Canon Brian Andrews telling his congregation that neither Santa Claus nor the Tooth Fairy really exist included a comment by the Rt Rev Dr David Jenkins that "the teaching of Christianity would benefit from the separation of fairytale from reality".

Would he agree that children should also be taught that biblical fables such as Noah's Ark or Jonah in the belly of the whale be included? Yours sincerely, R. KIMBER, Kilmarnock, El 18 December

From Mr Stephen Howarth
Sir: Reindeer may not be very strong, as Lars Breimer observes (letter, 19 December) but they are certainly strong enough to pull a man in a sledge. It was a reindeer pulling a sledge that saved the life of Jan Baalsrud, a Norwegian soldier, sent from Britain in March 1943 with 11 others to sabotage a northern airbase in their Nazi-occupied homeland. The mission was betrayed and all the participants except Baalsrud were shot dead or captured. Baalsrud escaped into the snow barefoot and minus one toe, which had been shot off by a stray bullet. His only hope was to strike out for neutral Sweden, 80 miles across the mountains.

The journey took two months and would never have succeeded but for his own powers of endurance and the impressive

courage of other Norwegians who risked their own lives to save him from execution as a spy. Passed on from one to another in an anonymous chain, he was brought at last to a high plateau, where two Lapps strapped him into their leading reindeer's sledge. Followed by a herd of 500 reindeer, Baalsrud was pulled in this manner for two days until they reached the frontier, where a German patrol encountered them. Under fire from the patrol, the entire herd stampeded across the final barrier: a semi-frozen lake. The shots did not stop until they reached the Swedish shore.

It probably helped that, by then, Baalsrud had lost half his normal weight and was only five and a half stone. Whether the reindeer could have done the same with Father Christmas is another question. Yours faithfully, STEPHEN HOWARTH, Shelton, Nottinghamshire 19 December

From Canon Owen Vigeon
Sir: When my eldest daughter was seven years old, we overheard her instructing her kid brother on Christmas Eve in these words:

"You see, Tim, Father Christmas is a game we children have to play with grown-ups, so that they won't be disappointed. Are vicarages the last refuge of the Enlightenment? Yours faithfully, OWEN VIGEON, Bromsgrove 19 December

No BSE from SAEs

From Dr Mark Szczelkun
Sir: Richard Huddy need not worry about BSE and stamps (Letters, 12 December). All Royal Mail stamps use glue derived from non-animal sources. I am less sure about envelopes, however, and he would do best to check with the manufacturers involved. Yours faithfully, MARK SZCZELKUN, Department of Biochemistry, University of Bristol Bristol 19 December

From The Rev David F. Flavell
Sir: Why does the consumer have to stop eating beef just because the British farmer cannot provide a guaranteed BSE-free product?

This morning my local supermarket is charging £3.90 a pound for steak. In America the price for the same product is only £1.60 (\$2.40). I would like to be able to buy this better value and BSE-free meat myself, but the Common Agricultural Policy will not let me.

No doubt American beef has its own contamination problems, but at those sort of prices I'm prepared to take my chances. At least I would like to have the choice. Can anybody give me one good reason why I should not? Yours sincerely, DAVID F. FLAVELL, Peterlee, Co Durham 19 December

Snobs labelled?

From Mr Joel Down
Sir: Please do not be so patronising about high-street shopping ("Christmas challenge in the high street", 12 December). I imagine that many of your readers, like myself, have neither the time nor the money to shop at leisure in London's designer outlets. We have to make do with Next, H & M, Marks & Spencer, or our "average dismal high streets" for our Christmas gifts. Surely it is the thought, not the label, that counts. Yours faithfully, JOEL DOWN, Rodemershams, Kent 19 December

Bouncing Euro

From Mrs Jean Brazier
Sir: So, we are going to have a mammoth as our currency (Euro is a kind of kangaroo). I assume that a hundredth of a Euro will be a Joey.

Yours faithfully, JEAN BRAZIER, Bristol

From Mr Geoff Sherlock
Sir: As it has been decided to call the new unit of currency for Europe the "Euro", will financial experts be called "Eurologists" in future? Yours faithfully, GEOFF SHERLOCK, Amersham, Buckinghamshire 15 December

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 6DL, and include a daytime telephone number. Please cite page reference and date for any articles mentioned. Letters may be faxed to 0171-293 2856, or sent by e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret that, owing to the large volume of correspondence received, we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

Buy

Ruin

Grey Porter

We are go

Buying more than just a good education

If the independent schools' sector is going to survive in a changing world, it must shed its unpleasant ethos

The bill has just come in from my son's London prep school at the end of term. Tucked neatly inside was a glossy leaflet, the bulletin of the Friends of Independent Schools. It is a document sent out with most private school bills in Britain.

Am I a Friend of Independent Schools? Well, each of my four children has spent some time in one, at differing points in their school careers. But a Friend? I suppose so, yes. I do not indulge in that liberal guesswork that uses the private sector but blunders and apologises. I could say: "Well, I live in Lambeth, worst schools in the country, so you see, really, we had little choice. If I lived in Potters Bar or somewhere, of course it would be different." Maybe it would, maybe it wouldn't, but like most people who can afford it, I would be secure in the knowledge that I still had the choice to go private if I didn't like the way things were going in a state school. So, as I started to read this bulletin, I was willing to accept the sobriquet "Friend".

That was until I actually read it. It turned out to be not a general newsletter about exciting and innovative best practice ideas in private schools, but almost entirely devoted to anti-Labour propaganda. Without any actual untruth, its cumulative effect is misleading about the state of Labour policy.

True, this time last year the Labour Party made a slight dog's breakfast of its policy, when David Blunkett mentioned some possibilities, including an end to charitable status and imposing VAT on private schools, only to have Tony Blair repudiate him. But who

in their right mind really thinks Tony Blair's secret agenda is to get into power and effectively demolish private education as soon as he steps inside No 10? Even though Labour's past policy has been antagonistic towards private education and there will always be a strong vein of sentiment against it, Tony Blair is unlikely to loosen his grip on this key policy in the face of a consistent 70 per cent public opposition to abolishing private schools.

Even the pledge on the assisted places scheme, which Labour has said it will abandon, is watered down, with talk of special schemes for local education authorities to buy places in private schools for gifted or musical or other exceptional children. Schools may in future have to earn their charitable status by showing they offer some of their facilities to others in the community. But this hardly amounts to a Red Peril.

Is this policy so threatening as to justify a whole campaign addressed to private school parents? In the bulletin, the director of Isis, the independent schools' lobby that produces the leaflet, writes: "It is unclear to what extent so-called 'New' Labour has undergone a genuine conversion to an acceptance of parents exercising choice in ways which are contrary to Old Labour's long-entrenched prejudices against independent education and academic selection. It will almost certainly remain unclear until Labour in government has to resolve its internal conflicts."

"We know Labour would attack choice by phasing out the assisted places scheme. We know that attacking the charitable status of independent schools is back on the agenda."



POLLY TOYNEBEE

It gives children the sense that anyone from a state school is an unwashed alien

"We know it still upholds the comprehensive ideal: academic selection, whether in independent or the remaining state grammar schools, is anathema."

"We know that, whatever fine words may come from the national spokesmen of 'New' Labour about co-operation between maintained and independent sectors, Old Labour at local level takes every opportunity to attack it."

And opposite this commentary there is a glowing interview with Gillian Shepherd, who is headlined, unsurprisingly, as "declaring her wholehearted support for the independent sector."

When I questioned David Woodhead, the Isis director, he said it was their job to challenge Labour policy and, anyway, they had printed an interview with David Blunkett in the full Isis magazine recently.

By now I am affronted by the idea that because I send my child to a pri-

vate school I must be a fully paid-up Tory. It reminds me of a number of uncomfortable occasions in meetings with some parents and teachers, where the same crude assumption has been made. Of course, many teachers and heads are not like that at all; but when you buy into the private sector, you risk buying into a whole People-Like-Us ethos, and People Like Us means Tory.

Parents have all kinds of obvious reasons for choosing private schools—higher standards, more creative activities, smaller classes, better facilities and better exam results. But many private schools also like to suggest that their children will breathe in a "better" social ethos, or at least fewer anti-social attitudes.

A friend of mine's 10-year-old came home from his private school last week, a boy in constant trouble, not for real wickedness, but loss of every possession and perpetual detention for maths. His school has a comprehensive nearby, fairly black, and he reports that the most frequent insult he gets from his teachers is, "You look as if you come from XXXX! You have the manners of an XXXX boy! You should be in XXXX!" (the neighbourhood comprehensive). Being politically aware, incensed by snobbery and, anyway, flippant, he finally asked one of them with faux naivety, "Why? What's wrong with XXXX?" This was the mystifying answer: "Oh, they probably play reggae music on their fire alarm!"

So the private sector may buy you attitudes you do not like at all, redolent of an unthinking caste consciousness, racist, snobbish, giving the children a sense that anyone from a state school is an unwashed alien.

Considering that only 7.2 per cent

of children go to private schools, this is hardly likely to equip them well for the real world out there. Except, perhaps, that some of them will manage to live for ever in a little sheltered cocoon among those bankers, accountants, lawyers, stockbrokers or army officers who never mix socially from cradle to grave with anyone of a different background.

Well, what do you expect, I hear some readers retort, if you will insist on sending your child into a privileged elitist enclave?

This is what I expect: a private education system that reflects a world outside that has changed beyond all recognition. The knee-jerk, pull-up-the-drawbridge-and-keep-the-oiks-out attitude exuded by some teachers in these schools comes from a bygone age, and they'd better get real. More than half of all children now in private schools have parents both of whom were state educated. The Blair victory is so fearsome in itself that it is a signal that the class battle is at last across the old class battle lines.

If the private sector wants to offer "values" along with better computer facilities and science labs, it had better stop, take a deep breath, and consider just what these "values" are. Are children to be taught generosity, consideration for others, social awareness, a measure of humility at their own unearned good fortune and a sense of obligation to the community in which many may occupy positions of influence? Or are they simply to learn volubility of the monied kind: "My parents paid for me to come here so I can earn more, vote Tory, pay fewer taxes and look after my own?"

Sons damaged by fathers behaving badly

Catherine Hepburn examines the psychological effects of bad paternal care on inner-city boys

Studies of "psychological disorders" in boys have focused almost exclusively on mothers' care and so have resulted in widespread blaming of mothers, especially single mothers. I wanted to find out if fathers' care was important; in particular, whether having a neglectful, hostile or abusive father in the home, or an uninvolved, unreliable absent father, made a difference to a boy's behaviour. I presented my findings to the British Psychological Society's annual meeting yesterday.

For boys, it seems that a bad father is worse than no father. In my study, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, I talked to a group of 99 young men about the quality of care that their fathers provided throughout their childhood and adolescence. The young men, in their late teens and early twenties, were from inner-city Islington, in north London. What emerged was that those who had poor care from their father—either when he was present in the home or absent following divorce—were more likely to develop behaviour problems in their teens than those who had had good paternal care.

Poor paternal care from present fathers was experienced by around a quarter of the young men I saw. Typical recollections described a father who was never there, a distant figure uninvolved in his son's life, his schooling, his friends, his interests and his general welfare. Some fathers, when they were around, were hostile, rejecting and physically violent.

Experiences such as these often led to high rates of chronic behaviour problems in adolescence, such as truancy, theft, aggression and disruptiveness at school—seen in almost half of those with poor paternal care, in contrast to only a fifth of boys who had good paternal care.

The young men also discussed relationships with fathers who had left following divorce. Half of them had experienced family breakdown and all of them stayed with their mothers.

Around a third of father-son relationships ended completely after divorce and their fathers were never seen again. There was some indication that this was more likely to happen if the boy was very young at the time of the divorce and where mothers had remarried.

Contact sometimes ended for very good reasons, especially where the separation was caused by the father's violence to the mother. Boys with such memories quite understandably expressed anger, and fierce loyalty to their mother. One son commented: "I don't want nothing to do with him. I changed my surname because I don't want him to find me."

I was surprised to find that boys with no relationship at all with their absent father were not more disadvantaged than those whose father had maintained good, regular and reliable contact. In both these groups, around one fifth developed behaviour problems. Mothers certainly compensated for the lack of a father in many cases and in their sons' eyes had done a good job of bringing them up alone.

In contrast, those who had a

'I changed my surname because I don't want him to find me'

poor relationship with their father after divorce were more than twice as likely to develop behaviour problems. Poor relationships were described in terms of their father's unreliability in turning up for arranged visits or forgetting birthdays and Christmas presents. More than half of the boys with these experiences had behaviour problems in their teens.

The research puts fathers in the picture. The research suggests that poor-quality father-son relationships are more damaging than being brought up only by a single mother. A disrupted, chaotic paternal presence after divorce fails to provide the security that boys need to avoid the problems of adolescence. Fathers should be made more generally aware of the importance of their role as parents, and those who have not been violent to their families may need support to maintain a positive involvement with children after divorce. Good parental care is the key to healthy adolescent development, rather than who or how many parents provide that care.

The writer is senior lecturer in developmental psychology at the University of Westminster.

Ruined by a lie, not a lifestyle

Henry Porter analyses the tragedy of David Ashby, the homosexual MP who misjudged the spirit of the times

It is difficult today not to feel extremely sorry for David Ashby, the Conservative MP whose 20-day libel action against the *Sunday Times* ended in his humiliation and financial ruin. But as he sat with his head in his hands apparently weeping at the jury's verdict, it was also impossible not to wonder at the enormity of the damage that he has inflicted upon himself by bringing this case.

For the point that rings out clear from the Royal Courts of Justice is that shame lies not in the supposed homosexuality of a man in public life, but in the hypocrisy of his denial.

Nevertheless, the public response, I suspect, will be overwhelmingly sympathetic to Mr Ashby, and in the Commons MPs could only express regret at the way he had exposed himself and his family to the terrifying scrutiny of a libel trial. For everyone understands the forces that compelled him to fight the action to the last, and yet also the necessity of the newspaper proving its



Top: David Ashby, humiliated after his libel action against the 'Sunday Times'. Below: those who came out and prospered—from the left, Chris Smith MP, Sir Ian McKellen, Michael Barrymore, Rabbi Lionel Blue

Shame lies not in a man's supposed homosexuality but in the hypocrisy of denial

allegations. It was a tragic battle between reputation and truth, and with the evidence the *Sunday Times* had accumulated the latter was bound to be the victor.

Some 10 or 15 years ago, this same evidence might not have persuaded a jury. People were less likely to believe that public figures were gay, and consequently tended to give them the benefit of the doubt because of the great stigma attached to homosexuality.

Today things are very different. The ordinary people who sit on juries are much more comfortable with the idea of a politician's gayness. Moreover, they are familiar with the details of gay life. So they looked at the evidence less fearfully than they would have in the past, and decided that on balance Mr Ashby's behaviour suggested that he was in fact gay, and that he was therefore guilty of both hypocrisy and lying.

The tragedy of the case is that Mr Ashby did not appreciate how much things have changed and that his shame was in fact shameful. If he had been prepared to admit his relations with other men, or at least if he had let the *Sunday Times*'s accusation pass, people would not really have thought any the worse of him.

There are many gay MPs in Parlia-

ment, some living discreetly homosexual lives, while others, such as Chris Smith, the Shadow Heritage Secretary, are completely open about their sexuality. For Smith, it is simply not an issue: there is nothing any newspaper can discover in this area of his life that would embarrass him. But if you are going to be a gay MP, then Smith's constituency of Islington South is the best place for you.

Mr Ashby felt differently, perhaps because at 55 he is 11 years older than Smith and was brought up at a time when homosexuality was barely admitted, let alone tolerated. But he also probably believed that Conservative voters are more hostile to homosexuality. There may be some truth in this, and with a majority of only 979 in his Leicestershire North West constituency he calculated that it was bet-

ter to lie than to own up to what he regarded as a disgraceful and electorally damaging part of his life. It turned out to be a disastrous decision that was driven as much by his obvious ambivalence about his sexuality as any prejudice that might exist in his electorate.

It must also be said that lurking in his decision was probably an arrogance, or at least unworshipful hubris, which allowed him to pursue this thing to the bitter end, exposing his daughter to cross-examination and the shameful details of his marriage break-up to unforgiving public gaze.

Honesty would have been better, but it is difficult for such a man to gauge precisely how far attitudes have changed. People with different backgrounds are at variance on the matter of homosexuality in public life. And

some roles will be regarded as perfectly acceptable for a homosexual, while others not. An entertainer such as Michael Barrymore, who recently came out on a radio show, has not been substantially damaged. Not has the actor Sir Ian McKellen or Rabbi Lionel Blue. But if a Home Secretary was suddenly to emerge from the closet the reactions might be slightly different.

What is clear at the moment is that the British people—to say nothing of their ferocious press—will not endure hypocrisy in public life. If you emphasise the importance of family values, as David Ashby did in the last election, you cannot then leave your wife for another man without risking exposure and indeed ridicule. Hypocrisy was his crime, not homosexuality. That should be the message that goes out to any-

one in public life who might be tempted to bring a similar action, and also to any libel lawyers who may persuade their clients, against their best interest, that they should pursue a case that is clearly hopeless.

In these conditions where there is growing but not yet absolute tolerance of homosexuality in public life, it is extremely difficult for politicians and their lawyers to make these line calls. We must believe that individuals, however prominent, should be allowed a degree of privacy, yet there is a point when the personal becomes political and the subject of public interest. That was reached when Mr Ashby's private circumstances became so hopelessly at odds with his public attitudes. The same was true of a Church of England bishop who after criticising gay priests was exposed as having had a brief encounter in a gentlemen's lavatory when a young man.

It demands great strength of character for a man of Mr Ashby's con-

There is a point when the personal becomes political and the subject of public interest

servatism to shun a plainly hypocritical stance. He is of the old-fashioned school of gay, best represented by the late Lord (Tom) Driberg, who bedded as many men as he could, at the same time managing to preserve a public respectability of sorts. For a time Driberg was pretty brazen about his activities, and he relied on influential friends to get him out of scrapes, but there was also something about his style, a certain devil-may-care panache, which added to his protection.

This can be deployed much more effectively today. One only has to look at the flourishing career of Michael Barrymore to see that he has turned his coming out into a personal triumph, rather gratifyingly in defiance of the press, which had been tormenting him for a number of years but which now must reluctantly admit its admiration.

Openness may not yet completely disarm prejudice, but surely anything is better than the terrible humiliation through which Mr Ashby has put himself and his family over the past three weeks. He has only himself and perhaps his lawyers to blame, but it is right to extend our sympathy to him and to be grateful that his melancholy example will clear the thoughts of many in his position.

The writer is editor of *Tatler*.

ANOTHER VIEW Jane Procter

Balls are good training for princes

Prince William's attendance at a couple of teenage balls in the past few days has aroused much consternation. But why? There is nothing new about this particular breed of organised party. Since the early Eighties privately educated teenagers have been buying tickets through friends to go to dances, which to all intents and purposes provide innocent fun. They are held in London, supervised by adults, and there is no alcohol.

So of course Prince William should have gone to the Mistletoe and Feathers balls. If he is denied this sort of experience, in later life he may not know how to react to the inevitable

sexual confrontations that he will face.

A recent *Tatler* survey of his peers concluded: "This time next year, as Prince William enters his second year at Eton, there is at least a 70 per cent chance that he will be drinking and smoking. He will probably have tried drugs and he might even have had sex. These assumptions are made out as a result of what we know of William's character, not taking into consideration the habits of other Etonians. These are reasonable assumptions based on the results of our survey of teenagers, the children of affluent high achievers, the majority of whom have been privately educated."

Anyone who is shocked that the Prince and Princess of Wales have allowed their son to go on this harmless outing has no comprehension of how quickly young people grow up today. Admittedly, at 15½, Prince William was among the younger guests—but in two and a half years he may legally marry. Anyway, for the most part, all that the young revellers do is dance with each other, and there are battalions of patrolling adults to deter the more virulent perpetrators of wandering-hand disease. There is no opportunity for anything more grown-up—certainly not for

William, who was accompanied by a gun-toting bodyguard.

I am the mother of a 10-year-old girl, and don't know if I will want her to go to dances in just three years' time. But Prince William's big advantage (or disadvantage) is that he has an extremely loyal group of school-friends who help to lead off any Lolita in hotpants who may be eager to corrupt him or merely want to kiss the future heir for a dare.

Coming from Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, William probably enjoys having to queue up for a Coke or to collect his coat; it is the sort of treat he won't have for ever. Any-

way, Sunday's ball was hardly the most egalitarian gathering—every teenager had been vetted beforehand.

Sadly for the boys, who were so elegantly dressed, the girls looked more like Christmas decorations than the sartorial sophisticates they no doubt imagine themselves to be. But we shouldn't worry about any of these nymphets whisking him out of the singles' scene. As *Tatler*'s survey revealed, 12 per cent of teenagers defined a long-term relationship as one that lasts between one and two weeks.

The writer is editor of *Tatler*.

tell me one good thing about your bank

Adventure in US proves anything but a breeze



This retreat from American retail banking, a venture which has cost NatWest a small fortune to turn round, makes strategic sense.

It was always tempting fate for NatWest to post right from the outset a £2.7bn price tag for Bancorp, its US subsidiary. Goldman Sachs, the bank's adviser, appears to have let enthusiasm run away with it in explaining to anybody who would listen that NatWest would walk away with a full price from the sale of its US retail arm. The surge of banking mega-mergers in America drove such expectations.

In the event the sale was anything but a breeze, partly due to NatWest's keenness to take as much cash as possible and get out. The £2.7bn price finally paid by Fleet Financial, the acquisitive US bank holding company, is a poor one. It is just 1.5 times book value, rather than the twice that has been standard in recent US banking mergers.

Moreover, the premium is largely contained in the deferred consideration. That the share price rose so surprisingly strongly yesterday may have something to do with the fact that most analysts were barely back at their desks from NatWest's briefing before the market closed. Investors may take a more critical view when they appreciate the dilutive effect on earnings per share for a full year, which could be around 10 per cent.

That said, this retreat from American retail banking, a venture which has cost NatWest a small fortune to turn around, makes strategic sense. NatWest has decided to abandon those markets and parts of the world where it has little prospect of being anything but a bit player.

Shareholders should not hold their breath for a generous decision to return the capital with a special dividend or a share buy-back. Derek Wanless and Lord Alexander have other ideas, and have clearly flagged their ambitions to strengthen NatWest's UK retail position, probably by buying up a life insurance mutual. They would also like a retail fund manager.

And then there is the ambition to thrust NatWest Markets into the global investment banking elite by expansion in London and New York, notably in corporate finance. That is an awful lot of spending opportunity. So far, the NatWest team has erred on the side of the caution it says is the hallmark of the New Age British banker, a sharp contrast to the discredited managers of the 1980s who threw so much of the clearers' capital away on loss-making overseas investments and loans. It is a reputation, however, that still needs to be fully earned – and the further the management strays from the UK businesses it really knows, the more convincing the case it will have to make to investors when it eventually does spend the money.

EMU at the mercy of intangibles

Of a host of fishy numbers in the OECD forecasts for the next two years, one stands out a mile. The French budget deficit as a percentage of national output is projected at 3 per cent in 1997 – just allowing France to squeeze through the Maastricht conditions and take part in European monetary union. The embarrassment of a higher projection from the Paris-based inter-governmental thinktank would have been *de trop* for the French elite who are so intent on EMU as a means of containing their over-mighty German neighbour.

The OECD forecast was made after the Juppé plan to slash the social security deficit in November, but before the three-week-long protests that have only just petered out. Official statisticians calculated on Monday that the cost of the first two weeks of strikes amounted to 0.3 to 0.4 per cent of GDP and said that as a result the economy would stall in the final three months of the year. French employers have warned that the repercussions will continue to be felt in 1996, dragging down growth as firms satisfy demand from inventories that have been built up, rather than from new output.

The OECD is forecasting that the French economy will grow by 2.2 per cent in 1996 – 1 per cent less than it was predicting a year ago – and 2.7 per cent in 1997. Several City forecasters warn that France will struggle to make 1.5 per cent next year. As the OECD itself points out, it would only take annual growth of 0.5 per cent less than its projection for the next two years to push the budget deficit in 1997 up to 3.5 per cent – so pushing France into the EMU exclusion zone. The OECD's projection for French economic growth is itself tempered by some particularly cautious language including the hope that the painful Juppé plan will be the last dose of medicine voters have to swallow.

Come back Dr Pangloss – all is forgiven. This dubious reasoning contrasts markedly with the OECD's projection of an unchanged savings ratio in the UK, even though that was based on the assumption of no fiscal tightening next year. As for lower interest rates, everyone agrees they are necessary to revive the flagging French economy, but as ever, the commitment to the *franc fort* policy means that France must trail in the wake of the German Bundesbank. Despite the attempt of European leaders to breathe new life into EMU at Madrid, the OECD's forecast only goes to show how much the project remains at the mercy of intangibles – consumer confidence in France and above all the outlook for the dollar. A renewed strengthening of the German mark against the dollar could prove the last straw by preventing the much-needed loosening of French monetary policy.

deal that the critics predicted, both on the level of subsidies agreed and on the assurances given on service levels.

Operators are bidding not to make a cash payment but to receive one. The winners, other things being equal, are the companies that ask the Government for the lowest level of subsidy – in other words, the price for the franchises is a negative one.

The arithmetic is not exactly crystal-clear but it looks as if the bid represents a saving for the Government of well over £10m a year in subsidy compared with the payment to British Rail at the moment. If this were repeated across the 24 other franchises that are on offer or may eventually be put on the block, then it would represent a miraculous transformation of the industry's finances.

The Government hopes so. The subsidy arithmetic published at the time of the Budget implied a fall in the overall bill after privatisation (although the numbers have been deliberately obscured by taking the sale proceeds directly into the Department of Transport's operating budgets). But it is unlikely that all the 25 franchises on offer will attract bids for lower rather than higher subsidies. Stagecoach brings financial and managerial muscle to the South West Trains franchise, which it will need to cut costs and raise drivers' working hours. Conflict with the unions is inevitable. Whether the management buyouts that will win many of the other franchises have as much chance of success is another question.

First-class result with Stagecoach

The Government clearly likes offering the best wine first, at least with rail privatisation. Stagecoach's successful bid for South West Trains, the first passenger rail franchise to be formally signed, looks a much better

Coal Investments crisis deepens on planning setback

DAVID HELLIER

Coal Investments, the troubled mining company headed by former British Coal director Malcolm Edwards, sank into a deeper crisis yesterday as a further setback threatened to derail its talks with its bankers.

Just after midday the company requested the suspension of its shares following the refusal of planning permission for a planned coal face at Hem Heath Colliery, Stoke-on-Trent.

Although Coal is considering an appeal against the decision, the verdict could have a "substantial" effect on profits, said analysts, perhaps as much as 10 per cent. The company's advisers called for a suspension of the shares because they felt unable to give the market a hasty analysis of the decision and how it might affect the group's negotiations with its bankers.

"The revenues expected from this coal face were fairly fundamental to the financial projections on which the banks were working," Andy Quinn, from James Capel, one of the group's advisers, said last night. "It's not the case of there being a lack of confidence. It's just

that we were not in a position to inform the market properly."

The group was in discussions with its bankers at a pre-arranged meeting yesterday afternoon at the offices of UBS, which along with National Westminster Bank and Banque Indosuez, is one of the group's three lead banks.

The banks have appointed Arthur Andersen, the accountants, to give them an independent assessment of the company's prospects and they have also appointed a further specialised mining analyst. Some sources said that Mr Edwards would have difficulty surviving at the company.

The Hem Heath setback is the latest in a series of upsets to hit the company and is bound to adversely affect City sentiment as the group struggles to get a "rescue" rights issue off the ground. The shares were suspended at 25p. "This is not yet critical, but clearly it is not good news," a source close to the company said.

Since 1 December, the company has been reviewing its financial position. That day the group's shares fell 26p to 30p, at their low point, as investors

worried about the company's ability to continue paying its suppliers.

The group disclosed then that it planned a further injection of capital to achieve its planned level of production. It has been to the market three times already in the two years since it took over parts of British Coal. Yesterday the company said its interim results would be delayed pending clarification of its financial position.

Sources said the company, which was reported to be raising £15m-£25m, may now have to try for even more money if it can persuade investors to put up more cash.

Coal Investments has already said it is trying to strengthen its top management team. The company has paid dearly for being beaten by RJB Mining to the best of the British Coal fields. When the industry was sold off last year, industry observers questioned whether RJB, which bid £810m for most of the fields, had paid too much.

But RJB has managed to pay off a large chunk of its debt to its bankers while Coal Investments has struggled to match production targets.

Out of play: CINVen picks up sporting brands and equipment operation for £300m



High-powered: Dunlop Slazenger's brands are used by top sportspeople

Dunlop sold in BTR re-focus

TOM STEVENSON
Deputy City Editor

Dunlop Slazenger, owner of some of the sporting world's strongest brands, was sold yesterday for £300m. The disposal is the latest move in a clear-out of BTR's peripheral businesses as the industrial conglomerate focuses on its manufacturing operations around the world. CINVen, the former venture capital arm of the British Coal pension fund, is the buyer, with the deal expected to be finalised early next year.

The golf balls to tennis rackets operation was acquired in the early 1980s as part of the £349m acquisition of Dunlop's sports, leisure, aerospace and general products operations. Brand names include Maxfli and Carlton as well as the main two lines. In the UK, the business acts as sole distributor of Puma products.

The deal is the second sizeable purchase by CINVen since British Coal sold the business to its managers. Last week it spent £179m on the healthcare division of Compass Group. Other famous brands bought by the group this year include Automotive Products for £18m and Corel Classics for £13m.

For BTR, the deal represents the latest stage in a continuing focus on its world-wide manufacturing operations. Last month it sold Ticon, a UK quarrying business, to Minoro for £330m and the same company's US activities are widely tipped to be on the block.

Both deals are being used to reduce BTR's debts, which have been given a sizeable boost by the acquisition, announced earlier in the year, of BTR Nylex, the company's Australian subsidiary. The tidying up of BTR's portfolio marks the end of an era at the company, weeks before Alan Jackson, its Australian chief executive, hands over the reins to the new boss, Ian Strachan from RITZ.

BTR's shares were unchanged on the news yesterday at 316p as the market waited on further details of the disposal. There was no indication of Dunlop Slazenger's profitability although the business is understood to have improved its performance throughout the recession.

Last year, in the face of economic slowdown and a reduction in the number of people playing tennis, more precisely by the group this year include Automotive Products for £18m and Corel Classics for £13m.

For BTR, the deal represents the latest stage in a continuing focus on its world-wide manufacturing operations. Last month it sold Ticon, a UK quarrying business, to Minoro for £330m and the same company's US activities are widely tipped to be on the block.

Both deals are being used to reduce BTR's debts, which have been given a sizeable boost by the acquisition, announced earlier in the year, of BTR Nylex, the company's Australian subsidiary.

The tidying up of BTR's portfolio marks the end of an era at the company, weeks before Alan Jackson, its Australian chief executive, hands over the reins to the new boss, Ian Strachan from RITZ.

BTR's shares were unchanged on the news yesterday at 316p as the market waited on further details of the disposal. There was no indication of Dunlop Slazenger's profitability although the business is understood to have improved its performance throughout the recession.

Companies suffering 'reform indigestion'

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

The boardroom reforms from the Cadbury Committee on corporate governance have had no positive effect on financial performance, according to the vast majority of respondents to a CBI and Touche Ross survey of chairmen and chief executives. This was the view of 90 per cent of those surveyed.

The survey also found that most companies – 85 per cent – want further reforms to corporate governance to be put on hold for two years while the results of the Cadbury and Greenbury committees are digested.

The results back the CBI's view that companies are suffering corporate governance indigestion and do not want any further big changes until there is more experience of how the

existing requirements work. Nearly half the respondents – 42 per cent – singled out particular sections of the Cadbury code as needing to be changed.

And more than half – 54 per cent – felt that only larger listed companies should be required to comply with all the code, with a stronger majority of 67 per cent believing it should be modified for smaller listed companies.

Sir Bryan Nicholson, CBI president, said in a foreword to the survey report: "We must be careful that the wider purpose does not get lost in the detail of self-regulation and that necessary checks and balances against abuse do not undermine the cohesion and entrepreneurial drive of the board in its task of developing the business."

Martin Scicluna, chairman of Touche Ross, said: "UK plc

would like a year or two to collect and examine the evidence as to whether more change is necessary."

He said he was glad that Sir Ronald Hampel, chairman of ICI and of the successor committee to the Cadbury committee on corporate governance, had taken full account of this need to develop experience before considering further change.

Amec to seek new talks

RUSSELL HOTTEN

Amec is to seek talks with Kvaerner early in the new year to try to ease tensions after their bitter takeover battle. But the company said further merger talks with rival construction group Alfred McAlpine were unlikely.

Sir Alan Cockshaw, Amec's chairman, yesterday refused to blame Kvaerner for the acrimonious three week fight, saying "the hostilities were not necessarily of their making". Although he declined to point the finger of blame, Amec is known to have been deeply unhappy at the strategy used by Kvaerner's adviser, Brian Keelan of SBC Warburg.

Kvaerner's tactics, including making its first offer final, which reduced the bid timetable to 21 days, were seen as very aggressive and drew criticism from one of Amec's institutional shareholders, M&G.

Mr Keelan's role in Hong Kong Land's purchase of a stake in Trafalgar House, and his celebrated run-in with Sir Alastair Morton, gave him a high profile in the city. There were suggestions yesterday that the failed bid had sparked further discontent among the corporate finance team that came together with the SBC takeover of Warburg.

However, Kvaerner, which said at the start of the bid that hostile takeovers were not its style, was said to have been satisfied. "The client is not grumbling. After all, the bid nearly succeeded," said a spokesman.

Sir Alan said he felt happy with Kvaerner sitting on its 26.1 per cent stake. "They are our largest shareholder and we have got to find a way of working together."

BREITLING
1884



OLD NAVITIMER

Navitimer - On Course. A chronograph with a rotating bezel and a slide rule scale on the back of the case. The slide rule scale is used for calculating fuel consumption, engine speed, and other aviation-related data. The watch is made of stainless steel and has a black dial with white markings.

AVAILABLE FROM SELECTED JEWELLERS
THROUGHOUT GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.
FOR YOUR NEAREST STOCKIST TELEPHONE 0171 637 5167.

BREITLING SA, P.O. Box 1132, SWITZERLAND • 2340 GRENCHEN
Tel: 41 63 / 51 11 31. Fax: 41 63 / 53 10 09

INSTRUMENTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

The importance of being a Treasury wise woman

DIANE COYLE
Economics Correspondent

One of three new members of the Treasury's panel of independent forecasters, whose names were announced yesterday, had an early lesson in the importance of the appointment can bring.

Kate Barker, chief economist at the CBI, said a further modest fall in the pound would help exporters.

Her remarks briefly sent the pound down by more than half a pence against the mark on a day when financial markets were nervously awaiting the US Federal Reserve's decision on interest rates.

Ms Barker and Bridget Rosewell, director of Business Strategies, an economic consultancy, are the first women to sit on the panel. The third new member is Martin Weale, director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, an independent research organisation.



New faces: (from left to right) Bridget Rosewell, director of Business Strategies, Martin Weale, director of an independent research body, and Kate Barker of the CBI

have already been invited to stay until the end of 1996.

The new members broaden the range of expertise on the panel. Mr Weale is an academic who has recently joined the National Institute from Cambridge University.

The two women's extensive contacts with the business world fill the gap left by the departure of Andrew Sentance, an original panel member, when he moved from the CBI to the London Business School more than a year ago.

Ms Barker said yesterday: "I hope to be able to bring a business perspective to the panel. I'm pleased to note that it will continue to work on policy issues as well as forecasts of the economy." She worked as

Ford's head of economics before joining the CBI.

Ms Rosewell, a co-founder of Business Strategies and former deputy head of economics at the CBI, said she would be able to make a contribution on how economic policy affects the regions. Regional forecasting is her firm's speciality.

The new members leave the panel likely to produce a wide range of views about the economy. Some of its previous eight members have been argumentative, with opinions ranging from Professor Minford's right-wing monetarism to departing member Professor Wynne Godley's Keynesianism.

Mr Weale said yesterday: "I think I'd see myself very much as a mainstream economist."

IN BRIEF

Coats expects profits to dip

Coats Vvella, Britain's biggest textile company, warned that pre-tax profits for the year would be slightly below last year's £152m. City expectations were at about £160m. Coats said exceptionally warm weather lasting through to late November hit the performance of clothing across all its UK activities, while home furnishing volumes and margins did not recover as expected. Coats shares fell 1p to 169p. The company, which said trading conditions would remain subdued in 1996, announced the appointment of Kirk Stephenson as finance director from 1 April. He is currently group finance director of Amersham International.

How to succeed with joint ventures

Financial contributions are less important to the success of joint ventures than other factors, such as market knowledge, technical expertise, reputations and contacts, according to an international survey by accountants and management consultants Coopers & Lybrand. The main reasons for setting up the ventures were strategic, focusing on access to new markets and acquiring new technology and expertise.

Vosper shares rise on Navy partnership

Vosper Thornycroft shares rose 16p to 803p after the company said that Flagship Training, a joint venture company comprising Vosper, GEC Marconi and Procord, had been picked by the Royal Navy's Recruitment and Training Agency as its preferred long-term partner in Naval Training.

Airbus

Yesterday's story based on German news report of a bribes inquiry into Airbus plane orders did not mean to suggest that the company itself was raided. An Airbus spokesman said: "We are aware of the allegations, but our executives were not involved."

Yesterday's edition

We apologise that technical problems yesterday meant the first page of the Independent Business section failed to appear.

Business

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

First Choice stays on course

Book early or miss the plane is the hard-sell message being put across by the holiday companies. The reality is, however, that 20 per cent of holiday-makers will again leave it until the last moment before handing over a cheque at the travel agency.

The end result is that the industry will face a severe test of nerves, and will have to resist the temptation to panic and slash prices immediately when the season breaks up for next summer.

If the main goal is to achieve a reasonable balance between supply and demand, then the quoted holiday companies have no choice but to hold firm in prices, or suffer a damaging loss of credibility with investors.

First Choice's annual results, well flagged during the recent rights issue, are a further testament to one of the poorest summers the industry has experienced in a long time. Profits before tax for the year to 31 October collapsed from £10.2m to £1.2m.

However, to judge the rapidly changing First Choice by one set of numbers could be unjust. Clear analysis of the figures, which are remarkably transparent for a holiday company, shows a much healthier picture.

According to industry statistics, First Choice increased its share of the last summer holiday market from 1.8 to 2.2 per cent. Bookings for next summer, measured by 14 per cent, but the holiday industry is reporting a much bigger 25 per cent drop.

The overall industry fall of 25 per cent in bookings holds two worrying prospects. If the crucial January-to-March selling season goes badly, if that happens, the four operators will have cut capacity to 70 per cent of the 19 per cent of the holiday that have been taken out of the system. Moreover, it would spell disaster for travel agencies and raise questions about the logic of vertical integration in the industry.

First Choice can breathe a little more easily than other smaller rivals. Its capacity has to be cut again. It has managed to raise prices by around 4 per cent, which is more than the market-wide average.

The ability to push prices above those being charged in 1993 has mainly been possible by improving brand awareness through direct the first Choice's advertising and a cupful of brand names, and by cultivating a perception of value for money through smart and cost-effective marketing moves such as sponsoring a weather forecast on television.

Moreover, First Choice, like Air-tours, is gradually erasing the traditional winter loss made by holiday companies by the acquisition of counter-seasonal businesses in Canada, where the populace flies south when the snow starts falling and stays at home in the summer.

If First Choice continues as is, there is every chance it will show taxable profits of £25m this year, and earnings per share of 5.5p. The dividend is unlikely to be raised from 3.85p, but a gross yield of 7.5 per cent on the shares, which trade at 64p, has attractions.

Growth to slow at Eurotherm

Since Claes Hultman joined as chief executive of Eurotherm five years ago, the electrical components group has gone from strength to strength. Pre-tax profits have grown at least 25 per cent a year since his appointment. The shares have risen more than fivefold.

Yesterday's results continued the trend, although there was a warning that the market would be wrong to expect such spectacular growth every year.

This was the first time in years that Eurotherm had not sailed through its profit forecasts.

Pre-tax profits grew by a whopping 30 per cent to £41m in the year to October, although this was slightly below some expectations. Sales were up 16 per cent at £195m.

The growth has been achieved by the disposal of peripheral business to concentrate on the manufacture of industrial process equipment such as temperature controllers.

Mr Hultman has been rationalising manufacturing processes and has invested £10m in new machinery during the year. Stocks have fallen 5 per cent and a steady stream of new products has been launched, which should yield more benefits in the current year than the one just finished.

Eurotherm has successfully integrated the American drive manufacturer it acquired this year. With £31m of cash, up from £21m last year, it is planning other bolt-on deals.

Eurotherm has benefited from a buoyant market in the past 18 months. The European economies have been improving while the plastic industries it supplies have also been enjoying rising fortunes. Although the current year

has started well, with orders up 18 per cent in the four weeks since the year-end, the company felt it was prudent to dampen expectations for the current year. Growth will be dependent on trading conditions, the company said, so don't expect these kind of results in perpetuity.

All downhill at Howden

Howden looked to have put the difficulties of the early 1990s behind it and the Glasgow-based engineering group saw its shares rise steadily as the heavy loss of 1991 fell out of comparisons.

After its well publicised problems supplying a machine to tunnel under Denmark's Store Belt, the shares fell to a low of 30p but had recovered to 102p by the beginning of 1994.

Since then it has been downhill all the way and the decline has accelerated worryingly in the past few weeks as it has become increasingly obvious that growth at the industrial fans and specialist drilling equipment maker has stagnated. Yesterday analysts were pointed towards pre-tax profits of about £32.5m, barely above last year's £31m, after a 4 per cent rise in first-half pre-tax profits to £11m and a similar rise in earnings per share to 2.6p.

There are clouds on a number of fronts. Germany remains a drag, despite an improvement in orders for specialist drilling machines. There was little demand for tunnel boring machines and that division has been hived off organisationally so the German management team can improve efficiencies.

In America, although aerospace and processing and packaging equipment continued to chip in healthy profits, the rate of order intake has slowed as expenditure plans are postponed or delayed. That is a worrying sign for a company as cyclical as Howden and goes some way to explaining the lousy rating the market is prepared to assign to the company's earnings stream.

On the basis of forecast profits, the shares stand on a prospective price-earnings ratio of only about 8 at yesterday's 68p, up 1p.

That seems harsh given a comfortable gearing level, the 26 per cent order increase in the first half-year and an optimistic 7 per cent dividend increase.

With a good geographical spread, lower exposure to volatile chunky projects and a yield of 5 per cent, the shares are supported if unexciting.

Market value: £152m, share price 64p

Trading record	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Turnover (£m)	644	772	710	822	934
Pre-tax profits (£m)	31.6	25.5	3.4	16.3	1.3
Dividends per share (pence)	15.1	11.6	4.7	8.2	3.5
Dividends per share (pence)	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.85	3.85

Passenger carryings

600s

722 Third Party

959 Signature vacations

2,194 Tour operations

Share price

pence

140

120

100

80

60

40

20

1991 92 93 94 95

Downward cast: The OECD is pessimistic about the Chancellor's Budget forecasts
Growth 'set to fall' in OECD

PAUL WALLACE
Economics Editor

The British economy will grow by 1.5 per cent, a considerably less than Kenneth Clarke forecast at the time of his Budget, says the OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. In its half-yearly presentation of economic

prospects, the OECD cut its overall growth forecast for its 25 member countries. It warned that the pace of economic expansion could fall still further if budget deficits are not curtailed and consumer confidence remains weak.

The OECD projects that the British economy will expand at only 2.4 per cent next year,

compared with the 3 per cent forecast by the Chancellor. The principal reason for the disagreement is that the OECD is less optimistic about the outlook for consumer spending next year, saying that it will grow by 2.5 per cent, little more than this year. The Treasury is predicting a 3.5 per cent increase.

This "relatively cautious view" is mainly because the OECD does not think consumers will dip into their savings to finance expenditure. The Treasury thinks the household savings ratio will fall by about 1 per cent in 1996. The Treasury's forecast also includes the effect of tax cuts, estimated to add 0.6 per cent to the growth of real personal disposable income next year. Neither forecast assumed changes in interest rates, which were cut last week by a quarter per cent.

The Paris-based think-tank is also more pessimistic about the outlook for the current account balance, which it projects at £11bn in 1996, double the forecast in the Budget. It thinks that imports will grow faster than exports whereas the Treasury thinks the opposite will occur. However, the OECD is more optimistic about the medium-term outlook. By mid-1996, it says, "the economy could be achieving a soft landing, with sustained output growth, the unemployment rate falling slowly towards its natural rate, and the PSBR on track towards a sustainable medium-term position. Such a configuration would prepare the ground for sustained output growth with low inflation in 1997 and beyond."

The OECD thinks that the UK will narrowly meet the criterion for budget deficits for eligibility to enter European monetary union. It predicts a deficit/GDP ratio of 2.5 per cent in 1997, just under the threshold of 3 per cent or less set by the Maastricht Treaty.

The OECD now thinks output will expand by 2.6 per cent in 1996 for all 25 member countries compared with the 2.9 per cent it was projecting a year ago. There has been a sharp downward revision to its outlook for growth in OECD Europe from 3.2 to 2.6 per cent.

German growth in 1996 has been pushed down from the 3.5 per cent projected in December 1994 to 2.4 per cent. The French economy is seen as growing at 2.2 per cent in 1996, compared with the forecast 3.2 per cent.

Even these forecasts will be regarded as optimistic by many market economists. UBS is predicting growth of just 1.5 per cent in Germany in 1996 and HSBC Markets is forecasting a similarly modest rate of expansion for France.

Despite this, the OECD said there was only limited scope for cuts in German interest rates to reinvigorate growth in Europe. While low inflation and sluggish money supply growth pointed to a reduction in rates, high wage settlements in 1995, planned tax cuts and higher capacity utilisation pointed towards a more cautious stance. The implication is that the Bundesbank's cut in rates last week may be the last.

The OECD points to three principal downside risks to its general outlook for the OECD area. A failure to push through budget consolidation, particularly in the US, Italy and some

other European countries. "Would put current levels of long-term interest rates at risk and threaten the positive effect they are projected to have on private investment."

A second risk would come from a renewed weakening in the dollar against the yen and the mark. This would adversely affect prospects in Japan and Germany. Thirdly, consumer confidence could remain shaky, leading to higher saving and undermining the pick-up in consumer expenditure in Japan and Europe.

The OECD says that EMU will highlight the problem of malfunctioning labour markets. "Since monetary policy will be set on the basis of Europe-wide conditions, the relative inflexibility of Europe's labour markets will present problems for the various regions and, in turn, for the credibility of policies."

IN BRIEF

Trinity spreads wings with £14m buy

Trinity Holdings will buy the aircraft and cargo handling division of ML Holdings for £14.25m. The acquisition includes two main operations, Douglas, a UK manufacturer of airport ground support equipment and dockside tractors and trailers, and Schopf, a German maker of truckless mining dumpers and loaders. The acquisition is being funded by the issue of 4.5 million new Trinity shares at 32p in a vendor placing. Trinity already trades in the airport equipment sector and the integration of Douglas and Schopf with Trinity's Reliance Mercury division will create a business with sales of more than £40m.

Persona acquires Top Log for £20m

Persona, the UK distributor of PC networking and communications products, is to buy Top Log, a Paris-based distributor of Unix and other network products for £19.9m. The deal will be funded by a 17-for-20 rights issue at 225p to raise approximately £21.1m. The cash will be used to underwrite the issue. The acquisition in effect doubles the size of Persona in terms of turnover and profit.

Standard Life pushes into Paris

As part of a continuing push into the French property market, Standard Life has bought the freeholds on three prime office properties with ground floor retail space in Paris. The total value of the purchase, from AXA, the financial group, is Fr 670m (£91m).

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Company Holdings (p)	1,960 (+12%)	0.43m (+0.5m)	1.95p (+0.81p)	1.1
Bortholme (p)	1,590 (+18%)	32.1m (+2.1m)	25.1p (+2.4p)	7.5p (+0.5p)
First Choice Holidays (p)	92.5m (+52m)	1.5m (+1.5m)	1.7p (+0.7p)	2.85p (+1)
Howden Group (p)	11.7m (+154m)	11.6m (+10.2m)	2.6p (+2.5p)	0.95p (+0.95p)
Radisson Hotel (p)	0.4m (+0.5m)	0.0m (+0.07m)	7.7p (+0.25p)	nil (nil)
Whitaker (p)	0.4m (+1.45m)	0.57m (+0.55m)	0.5p (+0.5p)	0.5p (+0.5p)

(p) = Profit (d) = Dividend (N) = Net Income

Simon Pincombe CITY DEPT

Financial Dynamics gets some work experience

The Norwegian plunderers safely vanquished, Amec has further cause for satisfaction. The construction company will not be receiving an invoice from Financial Dynamics, the advisers it fired just days before the final bid deadline. It is understood that the public relations firm - which received its marching orders for breaching City takeover rules - has written this one off to bitter experience.

Given the short timescale of the bid this would never have been a big earner for the PR firm. The success fee was thought to be just shy of £100,000, with the same again to be billed for the routine work. Still, that is close on £200,000 down the drain and a damaged reputation to work on.

Instead, the success fee (and you can probably add a bit on here) goes into the Dewe Rogerson bank account - money the rival firm will doubtless claim was well spent given it had to pick up the pieces after such a demoralising incident.

Not bad for five days' work, though.

Barely weeks after it was revealed that the author Tom Clancy had lost \$1.6m to a conman he met at a baseball game comes news that many of New York's top models have been similarly hoodwinked. David Weil, 33, and Peter Buechler, 35, are charged with fleecing up to 30 of the nation's most-exposed women (some as young as 15) of \$1m through their Star Camp Management firm. Many of the models - who earn up to \$400,000 a year - were referred to Star by the prestigious Elite agency. The women thought their money was being invested. But the advisers had used it to buy Porsches and pay substantial tax bills.

You would have thought that a mobile bank - which started



One of the more enduring refrains in popular music surfaces again - namely the long-running dispute between the Sixties pop group, The Hollies (above), and their one-time bass guitarist, Eric Haydock, who plucked for the hand between 1962 and 1966, is on the wrong end of a writ from his evergreen contemporaries who are seeking to prevent him from his new band, suggesting that they are in any way connected with The Hollies.

Sixties buffs may think they have heard this all before. And indeed they have. The Hollies, who still record as a unit, have already won a similar action with undisclosed damages. And the solicitor representing The Hollies? One Brian Eagles.

life as a converted coach and ran to a published timetable in remote rural areas - would have been a sitting duck to anyone with a sawn-off shotgun and a hole in his pocket. But Midland assures us that it is now 25 years since its death-on-wheels service has been operating in Lincolnshire, Cornwall and Wales and there has not been a single unsavoury incident. Someone did once mistake it for a bus. But that appears to be it. "Of course, they are now modern armoured-plated vehicles," says a Midland spokesman, adding that Securix vans tend to carry a lot more cash (in case any villains are reading).

Today's offering in our pre-Christmas week series of

great executives and their words of wisdom comes from Sir Anthony Gill, the former chairman of Lucas Industries. The advice is to Alida Bishop, an 18-year-old pupil who is about to leave Heathfield school in Assot.

"Understand the meaning of integrity," writes Sir Anthony. "Commit to it and live by it - but do not expect always to find it in others."

Heavyweight stuff, indeed. And with more than a touch of piety. You will recall that it came as something of a shock to Sir Anthony to discover that one of his integral US operations had been falsifying test certificates for aircraft landing gear - a practice that cost Lucas squillions of dollars in damages and much loss of reputation.

£682m Glaxo disposal chips at debt mountain

NIGEL COPE

Glaxo Wellcome is off-loading another unwanted chunk of the old Wellcome empire with the sale of Wellcome's cough and cold cure interests to Warner Lambert of the United States for \$1.1bn (£682m).

The drugs giant is selling its stake in the Warner Wellcome joint venture, which includes the cough mixtures Acicfed and Salsafed, as well as the analgesic, Calpol. However, the deal does not include medicines such as Beecham's hay-fever treatment and Zovirax cold sore cream.

The deal is the latest in a string of cuts at Wellcome. It follows the decision in June to close Wellcome's research and development facility in Beckenham, Kent, which employed 1,500 staff. In September it announced a £1.2bn cost-cutting programme that would mean the loss of 7,500 jobs.

Of these, 1,700 will go in the UK. A further 1,000 will be lost from the group's research and development facilities by 1998.

Yesterday's sale will reduce Glaxo's debt mountain, which stood at £3.5bn following the \$9bn acquisition of Wellcome in March. It is expected to pay down the debt a year earlier than forecast and be cash-positive by the end of 1998.

Steve Plog, pharmaceuticals analyst at NatWest Securities, said: "It's a good deal because it pays down debt and gets rid of seasonal products that were in mature markets."

Glaxo Wellcome said: "It shows we are focusing on developing prescription medicines, and also developing medicines when they come off prescription and become available over the counter."

Sir Richard Sykes, chief executive, said the new structure represented a "simplified rela-

tionship" that would enable the company to concentrate on research-based prescription products.

Wellcome had signed a joint venture agreement with Warner Lambert in 1993 under the name Warner Wellcome Consumer Healthcare. The deal included brands such as Listerine and Simulac.

Glaxo had signed a similar joint venture with Warner Lambert a year earlier. The agreement covered brands such as the Zantac heartburn relief treatment. Glaxo's share of Warner Wellcome's pre-tax profit was £38m last year. Its share of net assets stood at £23m.

Glaxo Wellcome's shares fell 7p to 878p yesterday. The company will continue to manufacture OTC products at its manufacturing sites to meet existing contracts with Warner Lambert. These agreements last until 1999.

Finance & Legal

A 5 page appointment section covering vital issues in accountancy, public sector finance and the legal profession.

See pages 16 - 19
section two

To book your advertisement call
The Finance & Legal Team on
0171 293 2310

Every Wednesday in the
INDEPENDENT
section two

BANK OF SCOTLAND

INTEREST RATE CHANGE

With effect from 19th December 1995, interest rates payable on the undernoted accounts have changed.

MONEY MARKET CHEQUE ACCOUNT	Gross %	BANKING DIRECT CHEQUE ACCOUNT	Gross %
£250,000 and above	6.00	£100,000 and above	5.00
£100,000 to £249,999	5.00	£25,000 to £99,999	2.25
£25,000 to £99,999	4.75	£10,000 to £24,999	1.75
£2,500 to £24,999	4.00	£5,000 to £9,999	1.25
		Less than £5,000	0.25

MONEY MARKET BUSINESS CHEQUE ACCOUNT	Gross %	BANKING DIRECT INVESTMENT ACCOUNT	Gross %
£250,000 and above	6.00	£250,000 and above	6.25
£100,000 to £249,999	5.00	£25,000 to £249,999	5.75
£25,000 to £99,999	4.00	£10,000 to £24,999	5.00
£2,500 to £24,999	3.50	£5,000 to £9,999	4.25
		Less than £5,000	3.50

BANK OF SCOTLAND
CENTREBANK DIVISION

*Gross - The annual rate of interest payable without the deduction of basic rate income tax to eligible non-tax-payers. Interest payable monthly. Interest rates subject to variation.

market report/shares

TAKING STOCK

Fears of meltdown give way to a British Gas fantasy

DATA BANK

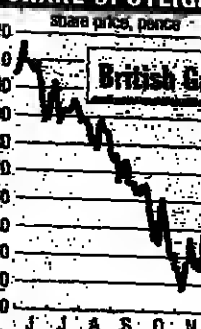
FT-SE 100
3,576.9 -19.2

FT-SE 250
3,937.4 -16.6

FT-SE 350
1,778.6 -9.1

SEAQ VOLUME
933m shares
27,556 bargains
Gilt Index
95.53 -0.40

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



The feared meltdown failed to materialise despite a volatile New York display and, it could be argued, the stock market was so relieved it indulged in one of the most fanciful takeover dreams of the year.

The ill-starred British Gas, complete with chief executive Cedric Brown, became the centre of attraction as stories flowed that a takeover bid—no body bothered to discover whether it was supposed to be friendly or hostile—was being prepared.

British Petroleum, which has had its problems with Westminster, and Shell were the names in the frame.

In heavy trading Gas, in a willing market, rose 10.5p to 239.5p with some of the more perceptive punters prepared to venture a modest flutter on the story.

The arrival of merchant banker Kenneth Gardener as the man charged with trying to

renegotiate Gas's onerous take-or-pay North Sea contracts could, it was argued, be responsible for the price advance.

But with Mr. Gardener facing a daunting task the hectic share trading seemed to lead itself to a more short-term explanation.

With Gas valued at more than £10bn a predator would need considerable ammunition. BP down 7p at 519p, and Shell, up 8p at 834p, have the necessary firepower.

The rest of the market spent the day fretting about New York after the dramatic overnight 100 point-plus slump. But with Wall Street refusing to panic, at least during London trading, the FT-SE 100 index ended a containable 19.2 points lower at 3,576.9. At one time it was off 37.6.

Even so, in the past three trading days, traditionally a jolly time for the market, Foot-



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

the shares, 25 million of them, were placed at a profit at 199p. PowerGen drew comfort from the share deluge, gaining 12p to 514p.

Legal & General, the insurance group, came to life in trading as National Westminster Bank sold its US operation for \$3.56bn.

NorthWest is expected to move quickly to disgorge its own-found riches and L&G is one of the market's favourite candidates to collect a bid from the bank.

It gained 3p to 669p and NatWest 19.5p to 649p. Profit warnings took their toll. Courtauld Textiles fell 34p to 373p; Coates Vytella,

with a message that was less bleak than many feared, shaded 1p to 169p. Cautious comments from W. Canning, the chemical group, left the shares 18p weaker at 212p.

Tarmac gained 4.5p to 109.5p on SBC Warburg support and Murecos continued to gather support on hopes it is about to sell its packaging side: the shares rose 3p to 87p.

The day's newcomers had mixed fortunes. Century Inns ended at 118.5p against a 120p placing price. Polyphase, the bio-pharmaceutical company, touched 152p but found the soggy state of the market too much and had to settle for a 120p close against a 100p placing. Publisher Rushmore Wynne traded at 3.5p.

BTG fell 30p to 1.075p as some of its early investors placed 556,500 shares at 1.050p with institutions through Kleinwort Benson.

group, was firm at 33p to busy trading. The shares are well below perceived asset value and there is talk of corporate action.

Vodafone edged 3.5p higher to 211p helped by director buying.

Edward Peet acquired 100,000 shares at 209p, lifting his interest to 293,000.

Stagecoach, awarded the first British Rail franchise, advanced 11p to 29.5p and Vesper Therapeutics, on a caveat, progressed 16p to 803p. Capital, the specialist security group, held at 126p after a small companies fund acquired 10 per cent stake from directors Ken Dulieu and Robert Gateby at 123p.

Sleepy Kids, the animated cartoon group with the Duchess of York's Budge character in its portfolio, shaded to 39p as Williams de Broe, forecasting profits of £1m for the year just ended, said buy.

Severfield Reeve, the structural engineer, has won a contract for steel work at a new Siemens plant in North Tyndeside, lifting its order book to £12m.

It has recovered strongly from the impact of the recession and stockbroker Bell Lawrie White is looking for profits this year of £2m with £2.6m pencilled in for next year. The shares, at 155p, are at a peak.

Dawsongroup, the truck rental and cold store group, has fallen from a 343p peak this year. A sale at 270p, thought to be by an institution, has created unease and the shares shaded 7.5p to 267.5p.

In August, reporting record profits, the group sounded a cautionary note and doubts are being expressed whether market estimates of up to £13m will be met.

SHARE PRICE DATA

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: Ex rights = Ex-dividend; Ex-call = A Listed Securities Market's Suspended on Parly Paid on Nil Paid Shares.

Source: Financial.

THE INDEPENDENT INDEX

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from Seaq. Simply dial 0891 123 333, followed by the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 1233 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

FTSE 100 - Real-time 00 Sterling Rates 04 Privatisation Issues 36
UK Stock Market Report 05 Water Shares 39
UK Company News 02 Wall St Report 20 Electricity Shares 40
Foreign Exchange 03 Tokyo Market 21 High Street Shares 41

Anyone with a tone-dial telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including the portfolio facility, phone 0891 123 333. For assistance, call our helpline 071 575 4375 (9.30am - 5.30pm).

Call cost 39p per minute (excl. VAT), and 49p at all other times. Call charges include VAT.

MARKET LEADERS: TOP 20 VOLUMES

Stock Valued Share Valued Share Valued Share Valued Share

Alm Invest 12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

12,000 12,000 12,000 12,000

Foreign Exchange Rates

OTHER SPOT RATES					
Country	Starling	Dollar	Country	Starling	Dollar
Argentina	15434	62999	Nigeria	102727	85760
Australia	153688	10170	Oman	10594	8285
Brazil	14518	58974	Pakistan	53835	53216
Canada	125501	8378	Philippines	48462	34250
France	22118	9259	Portugal	73597	50595
Spain	12982	5491	Qatar	18761	16540
Switzerland	68872	43595	Romania	71435	45600
Taiwan	22716	143501	Saudi Arabia	52000	36982
Thailand	389635	28954	Turkey	42668	27340
U.K.	65582	34570	U.S.A.	5599	3657
Yemen	14822	20290	UAE		

Note: Forward rates quoted (top 5) are set at discount (backward) rates at premium (top 5). Firm the bank to high end of a premium (backward) exchange rates and low end of a discount (backward) rates.

Cable news: 121 3003

Interest Rates

UK Prime	6.50%	Germany Discount	100%	US Prime	6.75%	Japan Discount	0%
Base		Discount	5.00%	Discount	5.50%	Belgium Discount	30%
France	4.70%	Canada Prime	7.75%	Feed Funds	5.25%	Discount	31%
Intervention		Prime	8.2%	Spain	9.25%	Central	
Italy	9.00%	Discount		10-Day Repo		Government	
Netherlands		Discount	4.25%	Sweden	6.0%	Discount	1%
Advances	8.00%	Discount		Repo (Net)		London	

Money Market Rates

	Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Yr
Interbank	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4
Stearns Cds	-	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4
Local Authority Dps	-	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4
Discount Market Dps	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4
Treasury Bills (90d)	-	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4
Dealer Cds	-	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4
ECU Linked Dps	-	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for day	EstCosts traded	Chg
Long GB	(Dec 95)	10.24	95.00	5794
Long Euro Bond	(Mar 96)	98.55	98.54	145535
U.S. Bond	(Mar 96)	121.60	121.24	5780
Italian Bond	(Mar 96)	100.09	100.55	3380
3M Sterling	(Dec 95)	93.45	93.44	11116
3M Euro \$	(Mar 96)	93.70	93.60	9475
3M Euro \$	(Mar 96)	94.59		22685
3M Euro \$	(Mar 96)	96.36	96.33	20223
3M Euro \$	(Jun 96)	96.47	96.36	691
3M Euro \$	(Mar 96)	96.97	96.95	

[illegible]

193
192
191
190
189
188
187
186
185
184
183
182
181
180
179
178
177
176
175
174
173
172
171
170
169
168
167
166
165
164
163
162
161
160
159
158
157
156
155
154
153
152
151
150
149
148
147
146
145
144
143
142
141
140
139
138
137
136
135
134
133
132
131
130
129
128
127
126
125
124
123
122
121
120
119
118
117
116
115
114
113
112
111
110
109
108
107
106
105
104
103
102
101
100
99
98
97
96
95
94
93
92
91
90
89
88
87
86
85
84
83
82
81
80
79
78
77
76
75
74
73
72
71
70
69
68
67
66
65
64
63
62
61
60
59
58
57
56
55
54
53
52
51
50
49
48
47
46
45
44
43
42
41
40
39
38
37
36
35
34
33
32
31
30
29
28
27
26
25
24
23
22
21
20
19
18
17
16
15
14
13
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0

Commodities

INDUSTRIAL METALS - London Metal Exchange		Volume	LIKE Stocks
Shannon			
		3 mths	
Alu	HG	10575-09015	57450
Alu		1455-38	62400
Alu	Alloy A	2840-46	28075
Copper		709-11	34450
Lead		8270-95	14715
Nickel		8100-30	18775
Tin		10170-55	67120

[illegible][illegible]

Other Softs (Agriculture)							
Dec	Mace (N9*)	Shorne	550	Jan	Soya Oils	FL/100g	
Jan/Feb	Capon (1)	Shorne	320	Dec/Jan	Coconut Oil	1/1	Shorne
Jan	Orton (1)	Ucclestree	810	Jan	Sunflower Oil	Shorne	
Dec	Wool	Aurumg	780	Feb	Reprocessed Oil	FL/100g	
Jan	Rubber	Moorings	455	Dec/Jan	Groundnut Oil	Shorne	
Origins (Published - only origin): (1)Phipps/Groffs/2)Mullins 3)Jan Europe 4)Wes 5)Jan Europe 6)Wes 7)Jan Europe 8)Wes 9)Jan Europe 10)Wes 11)Jan Europe 12)Wes 13)Jan Europe 14)Wes 15)Jan Europe 16)Wes 17)Jan Europe 18)Wes 19)Jan Europe 20)Wes 21)Jan Europe 22)Wes 23)Jan Europe 24)Wes 25)Jan Europe 26)Wes 27)Jan Europe 28)Wes 29)Jan Europe 30)Wes 31)Jan Europe 32)Wes 33)Jan Europe 34)Wes 35)Jan Europe 36)Wes 37)Jan Europe 38)Wes 39)Jan Europe 40)Wes 41)Jan Europe 42)Wes 43)Jan Europe 44)Wes 45)Jan Europe 46)Wes 47)Jan Europe 48)Wes 49)Jan Europe 50)Wes 51)Jan Europe 52)Wes 53)Jan Europe 54)Wes 55)Jan Europe 56)Wes 57)Jan Europe 58)Wes 59)Jan Europe 60)Wes 61)Jan Europe 62)Wes 63)Jan Europe 64)Wes 65)Jan Europe 66)Wes 67)Jan Europe 68)Wes 69)Jan Europe 70)Wes 71)Jan Europe 72)Wes 73)Jan Europe 74)Wes 75)Jan Europe 76)Wes 77)Jan Europe 78)Wes 79)Jan Europe 80)Wes 81)Jan Europe 82)Wes 83)Jan Europe 84)Wes 85)Jan Europe 86)Wes 87)Jan Europe 88)Wes 89)Jan Europe 90)Wes 91)Jan Europe 92)Wes 93)Jan Europe 94)Wes 95)Jan Europe 96)Wes 97)Jan Europe 98)Wes 99)Jan Europe 100)Wes 101)Jan Europe 102)Wes 103)Jan Europe 104)Wes 105)Jan Europe 106)Wes 107)Jan Europe 108)Wes 109)Jan Europe 110)Wes 111)Jan Europe 112)Wes 113)Jan Europe 114)Wes 115)Jan Europe 116)Wes 117)Jan Europe 118)Wes 119)Jan Europe 120)Wes 121)Jan Europe 122)Wes 123)Jan Europe 124)Wes 125)Jan Europe 126)Wes 127)Jan Europe 128)Wes 129)Jan Europe 130)Wes 131)Jan Europe 132)Wes 133)Jan Europe 134)Wes 135)Jan Europe 136)Wes 137)Jan Europe 138)Wes 139)Jan Europe 140)Wes 141)Jan Europe 142)Wes 143)Jan Europe 144)Wes 145)Jan Europe 146)Wes 147)Jan Europe 148)Wes 149)Jan Europe 150)Wes 151)Jan Europe 152)Wes 153)Jan Europe 154)Wes 155)Jan Europe 156)Wes 157)Jan Europe 158)Wes 159)Jan Europe 160)Wes 161)Jan Europe 162)Wes 163)Jan Europe 164)Wes 165)Jan Europe 166)Wes 167)Jan Europe 168)Wes 169)Jan Europe 170)Wes 171)Jan Europe 172)Wes 173)Jan Europe 174)Wes 175)Jan Europe 176)Wes 177)Jan Europe 178)Wes 179)Jan Europe 180)Wes 181)Jan Europe 182)Wes 183)Jan Europe 184)Wes 185)Jan Europe 186)Wes 187)Jan Europe 188)Wes 189)Jan Europe 190)Wes 191)Jan Europe 192)Wes 193)Jan Europe 194)Wes 195)Jan Europe 196)Wes 197)Jan Europe 198)Wes 199)Jan Europe 200)Wes 201)Jan Europe 202)Wes 203)Jan Europe 204)Wes 205)Jan Europe 206)Wes 207)Jan Europe 208)Wes 209)Jan Europe 210)Wes 211)Jan Europe 212)Wes 213)Jan Europe 214)Wes 215)Jan Europe 216)Wes 217)Jan Europe 218)Wes 219)Jan Europe 220)Wes 221)Jan Europe 222)Wes 223)Jan Europe 224)Wes 225)Jan Europe 226)Wes 227)Jan Europe 228)Wes 229)Jan Europe 230)Wes 231)Jan Europe 232)Wes 233)Jan Europe 234)Wes 235)Jan Europe 236)Wes 237)Jan Europe 238)Wes 239)Jan Europe 240)Wes 241)Jan Europe 242)Wes 243)Jan Europe 244)Wes 245)Jan Europe 246)Wes 247)Jan Europe 248)Wes 249)Jan Europe 250)Wes 251)Jan Europe 252)Wes 253)Jan Europe 254)Wes 255)Jan Europe 256)Wes 257)Jan Europe 258)Wes 259)Jan Europe 260)Wes 261)Jan Europe 262)Wes 263)Jan Europe 264)Wes 265)Jan Europe 266)Wes 267)Jan Europe 268)Wes 269)Jan Europe 270)Wes 271)Jan Europe 272)Wes 273)Jan Europe 274)Wes 275)Jan Europe 276)Wes 277)Jan Europe 278)Wes 279)Jan Europe 280)Wes 281)Jan Europe 282)Wes 283)Jan Europe 284)Wes 285)Jan Europe 286)Wes 287)Jan Europe 288)Wes 289)Jan Europe 290)Wes 291)Jan Europe 292)Wes 293)Jan Europe 294)Wes 295)Jan Europe 296)Wes 297)Jan Europe 298)Wes 299)Jan Europe 300)Wes 301)Jan Europe 302)Wes 303)Jan Europe 304)Wes 305)Jan Europe 306)Wes 307)Jan Europe 308)Wes 309)Jan Europe 310)Wes 311)Jan Europe 312)Wes 313)Jan Europe 314)Wes 315)Jan Europe 316)Wes 317)Jan Europe 318)Wes 319)Jan Europe 320)Wes 321)Jan Europe 322)Wes 323)Jan Europe 324)Wes 325)Jan Europe 326)Wes 327)Jan Europe 328)Wes 329)Jan Europe 330)Wes 331)Jan Europe 332)Wes 333)Jan Europe 334)Wes 335)Jan Europe 336)Wes 337)Jan Europe 338)Wes 339)Jan Europe 340)Wes 341)Jan Europe 342)Wes 343)Jan Europe 344)Wes 345)Jan Europe 346)Wes 347)Jan Europe 348)Wes 349)Jan Europe 350)Wes 351)Jan Europe 352)Wes 353)Jan Europe 354)Wes 355)Jan Europe 356)Wes 357)Jan Europe 358)Wes 359)Jan Europe 360)Wes 361)Jan Europe 362)Wes 363)Jan Europe 364)Wes 365)Jan Europe 366)Wes 367)Jan Europe 368)Wes 369)Jan Europe 370)Wes 371)Jan Europe 372)Wes 373)Jan Europe 374)Wes 375)Jan Europe 376)Wes 377)Jan Europe 378)Wes 379)Jan Europe 380)Wes 381)Jan Europe 382)Wes 383)Jan Europe 384)Wes 385)Jan Europe 386)Wes 387)Jan Europe 388)Wes 389)Jan Europe 390)Wes 391)Jan Europe 392)Wes 393)Jan Europe 394)Wes 395)Jan Europe 396)Wes 397)Jan Europe 398)Wes 399)Jan Europe 400)Wes 401)Jan Europe 402)Wes 403)Jan Europe 404)Wes 405)Jan Europe 406)Wes 407)Jan Europe 408)Wes 409)Jan Europe 410)Wes 411)Jan Europe 412)Wes 413)Jan Europe 414)Wes 415)Jan Europe 416)Wes 417)Jan Europe 418)Wes 419)Jan Europe 420)Wes 421)Jan Europe 422)Wes 423)Jan Europe 424)Wes 425)Jan Europe 426)Wes 427)Jan Europe 428)Wes 429)Jan Europe 430)Wes 431)Jan Europe 432)Wes 433)Jan Europe 434)Wes 435)Jan Europe 436)Wes 437)Jan Europe 438)Wes 439)Jan Europe 440)Wes 441)Jan Europe 442)Wes 443)Jan Europe 444)Wes 445)Jan Europe 446)Wes 447)Jan Europe 448)Wes 449)Jan Europe 450)Wes 451)Jan Europe 452)Wes 453)Jan Europe 454)Wes 455)Jan Europe 456)Wes 457)Jan Europe 458)Wes 459)Jan Europe 460)Wes 461)Jan Europe 462)Wes 463)Jan Europe 464)Wes 465)Jan Europe 466)Wes 467)Jan Europe 468)Wes 469)Jan Europe 470)Wes 471)Jan Europe 472)Wes 473)Jan Europe 474)Wes 475)Jan Europe 476)Wes 477)Jan Europe 478)Wes 479)Jan Europe 480)Wes 481)Jan Europe 482)Wes 483)Jan Europe 484)Wes 485)Jan Europe 486)Wes 487)Jan Europe 488)Wes 489)Jan Europe 490)Wes 491)Jan Europe 492)Wes 493)Jan Europe 494)Wes 495)Jan Europe 496)Wes 497)Jan Europe 498)Wes 499)Jan Europe 500)Wes 501)Jan Europe 502)Wes 503)Jan Europe 504)Wes 505)Jan Europe 506)Wes 507)Jan Europe 508)Wes 509)Jan Europe 510)Wes 511)Jan Europe 512)Wes 513)Jan Europe 514)Wes 515)Jan Europe 516)Wes 517)Jan Europe 518)Wes 519)Jan Europe 520)Wes 521)Jan Europe 522)Wes 523)Jan Europe 524)Wes 525)Jan Europe 526)Wes 527)Jan Europe 528)Wes 529)Jan Europe 530)Wes 531)Jan Europe 532)Wes 533)Jan Europe 534)Wes 535)Jan Europe 536)Wes 537)Jan Europe 538)Wes 539)Jan Europe 540							

430	Feb	1247	-0.86	1845	Feb	17100	-0.75	Jan	1085	Canada (London)
430	Mar	1240	-0.67	1843	Mar	15246	+0.55	Feb	1075	Nigeria
	Apr	1261	-0.82	1846	Apr	15335	+0.25	Mar	1030	C. Coast
272	176	1839	Index:	17.21	176	16,093		Apr	176	Heavy Fuel Oil
* Since 1/2/85 previous day. Year ago prices show average for month. Source: ICIS-London Oil Nigeria. 1985										
231	COMMODITY INDICES									
231	*CSC indices									
231		Base date		+/-pt	%day	Dec 31st		%12month		%12month
231	Index	1970=100								
231	Grain	1970=100		+1.51	+1.32	10.76		+3.93		+0.65
231	Agricultural	1970=100		+2.84	+2.55	14.01		+2.29		+0.27
231	Energy	1970=100		0.08	+0.10	0.03		-0.18		-0.05
231	Metals	1970=100		+0.25	+0.25	1.03		+0.15		+0.03
231	Oil	1970=100		+0.25	+0.25	1.03		+0.15		+0.03

96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

86	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010
87	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010
88	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010
89	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010
90	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010
91	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010
92	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010
93	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010
94	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010
95	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010
96	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010
97	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010
98	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010
99	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010
100	Alma Lee Age 27 1/2 May	647	1988	MSD Memphis	2010

[illegible][illegible]

piggott
the fire

**RAPID
ACELINE**
RESULTS SERVICE
1-800-235-1668

Cricket

He also apologised for making public statements "about professional official and officiating in general, as well as walking off in the middle of a Grand Slam match watched by thousands of spectators." He admitted that had damaged the reputation of the game.

Megson is targeted by Norwich

Football
ALAN NIXON

Norwich City hope to name Gary Megson as their new manager in the next 48 hours. Robert Chase, the club's chairman, has made an approach to Bradford City to ask them to release their assistant manager, who was in charge in a caretaker role at Carrow Road last season.

Chase thinks Norwich made a mistake letting Megson go when Martin O'Neill was appointed and he believes that the return of Megson would have a calming influence on the atmosphere surrounding the East Anglian club.

Megson is working without a contract at Bradford, where he is No 2 to Chris Kamara, but he does not hide his ambitions to take on a manager's job on a permanent basis. Norwich plan to speak to Megson today and offer him the job that was surprisingly vacated by O'Neill at the weekend after a series of rows with Chase.

Megson knows the Norwich staff well, although he could not stop the club from being relegated in his brief spell at the helm last season, he is highly thought of at Carrow Road. Other people in the running, like Osvaldo Ardiles and Dave Bassett, are down the queue until Megson's fate is decided in talks with Bradford before the weekend.

O'Neill yesterday confirmed his decision to resign from Norwich. The 43-year-old left the Carrow Road club on Sunday but was understood to have had second thoughts and to be considering a return to the club. But, in a statement yesterday, Norwich revealed that O'Neill was not prepared to withdraw

his resignation, which has still not been accepted.

Whether O'Neill's final decision means that he will now be approached by Leicester City over their vacant managerial position remains unclear.

Mark McGhee, who left Leicester and took over at Wolves, is hoping to convince Vinny Samways, the Everton midfielder, to become his first signing for the Molineux club. The 27-year-old former Tottenham player travelled to the West Midlands yesterday for talks with McGhee over a possible loan spell. The move could be made permanent if the loan period works out well, with the fee likely to be in the region of £1.2m.

West Ham are giving a trial to Slaven Bilic, a Croatian centre-half who plays in Germany for Kaiserslautern. Bilic's visit forms a part of the Hammers' search for a long-term successor to Alvin Martin, who is now 37.

Blackburn, who have just lost Graeme Le Saux with a long-term injury, have learned that Ian Pearce, their England under-21 defender, faces further surgery on his ankle injury.

Craig Hignett, Middlesbrough's joint leading scorer, needs a hernia operation that could rule him out for up to six weeks.

Howard Kendall, Sheffield United's new manager, has made Michel Vonk his first signing for the Blades. Kendall agreed to pay Manchester City £350,000 for the 27-year-old Dutch defender.

Bournemouth have been fined £5,000, suspended for a year, as a result of crowd trouble during their match against Crewe at Dean Court earlier this season.

FA suspends ticket sales

The Football Association has frozen ticket sales for nine of next summer's European Championship matches following an avalanche of applications from fans.

Two of England's Group A matches and all three of Scotland's, including the Wembley showdown between the sides on Saturday 15 June, are now officially sold out.

However, Warhurst said: "We have had 50 operators on the phones at all times and people have known that tickets have been on sale since January 1994. Hopefully now that we have announced that ticket sales have been frozen for certain games, it will unfreeze the lines for people wanting tickets for other matches."

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP Final ticket sales suspended for the following matches: 20 June: Netherlands v Scotland (Wembley); 21 June: Turkey v Croatia (Old Trafford); 22 June: Scotland v England (Wembley); 23 June: Scotland v Switzerland (Wembley); 24 June: Netherlands v England (Wembley); 25 June: Croatia v Portugal (City Ground); 26 June: Denmark v Netherlands (Old Trafford); 27 June: Italy v Germany (Old Trafford).

The FA says some tickets have been held back for competing nations, including up to an extra 2,000 for Scottish fans hoping to see their team face the "old enemy" for the first time since 1989.

The Scots have so far only been guaranteed the regulation 7,000 seats that go to all the visiting countries for each of their matches.

An FA spokeswoman, Philippa Warhurst, said: "There is a possibility of more tickets being made available to Scotland fans. We are looking at security arrangements and we will see what we can do."

The FA has come in for heavy criticism from fans who have found the Euro 96 telephone lines jammed since Sunday's draw.

However, Warhurst said: "We have had 50 operators on the phones at all times and people have known that tickets have been on sale since January 1994. Hopefully now that we have announced that ticket sales have been frozen for certain games, it will unfreeze the lines for people wanting tickets for other matches."

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP Final ticket sales suspended for the following matches: 20 June: Netherlands v Scotland (Wembley); 21 June: Turkey v Croatia (Old Trafford); 22 June: Scotland v England (Wembley); 23 June: Scotland v Switzerland (Wembley); 24 June: Netherlands v England (Wembley); 25 June: Croatia v Portugal (City Ground); 26 June: Denmark v Netherlands (Old Trafford); 27 June: Italy v Germany (Old Trafford).

The FA says some tickets have been held back for competing nations, including up to an extra 2,000 for Scottish fans hoping to see their team face the "old enemy" for the first time since 1989.

The Scots have so far only been guaranteed the regulation 7,000 seats that go to all the visiting countries for each of their matches.



Champion's charge: Alberto Tomba, Italy's overall alpine ski World Cup holder, surges to his first slalom success of the season yesterday

Photograph: AFP

Tomba wins despite personal pressures

Alberto Tomba put his off-piste troubles behind him to win a World Cup slalom in Madonna Di Campiglio, Italy, yesterday. The overall World Cup holder marked his 29th birthday with victory after Jure Kosir, quickest in the first leg, failed to finish the second.

"You can imagine what this win means to me," Tomba said. He is formally under police investigation after a freelance photographer, Aldo Martin-

uzzi, who had sold nude photographs of him to a magazine, complained the Italian had thrown a heavy glass trophy at him after a World Cup race on Sunday.

Tomba faces a formal inquiry by Italy's para-military Carabinieri police after injuring the photographer. The Carabinieri said in a statement yesterday that its inquiry would "examine the disciplinary position" of Tomba. A sergeant in

the force, he could be either demoted or expelled from the police.

The popular skier's problems began after Sunday's giant slalom in Alta Badia when he appeared to injure the photographer, who has had several brushes with Tomba after marketing the nude photographs.

Martinuzzi, who was not at yesterday's race in Madonna, claims he cut his hand as a result of Tomba throwing a mag-

num of sparkling wine and then a heavy glass trophy at him during the prize giving ceremony. Tomba had finished third. The civilian police force said on Monday they were investigating the incident.

A hospital report sent to police in the northern Italian city of Bolzano said Martinuzzi had complained of being injured by an "object thrown deliberately" at him.

In a brief television interview,

Tomba apologised to his fans but not to Martinuzzi. "Some have misunderstood, interpreting this episode as a moment of hatred, a battle between two people," he said. "I honestly don't think I am a mean person. I would have acted out of sight of everybody. I am sorry for the fans."

Tomba was third fastest in the 59-gate first leg of yesterday's slalom but he whipped down the

second course to clock a combined time of 1min 34.62sec and secure his first victory of the season and the 30th slalom success of his career.

France's Yves Dimier was second - his best finish - in a distant 1:36.17. Italy's Konrad Ludstaetter moved up into third place when the overall World Cup leader, Lasse Kjus of Norway, was disqualified by the jury after the race for straddling a gate.

Sullivan back for Saints

Rugby League

Anthony Sullivan returns to action for St Helens today as they seek to reduce Wigan's lead at the top of the St Helens Centenary Championship to four points.

Sullivan, Saints' top try-scorer this season with 24, is in the side for the trip to Castleford after missing last week's victory over Oldham with a back injury. The winger Joey Hayes, who scored a hat-trick of tries against Oldham, is ruled out of his first match of the season with an ankle injury.

Chris Joynt, who damaged his shoulder against Oldham, and the suspended captain Bobbie Goulding are also missing.

Wales' Scott Gibbs takes over as skipper with Steve Prescott returning after injury on the wing. Phil Waring takes over from Goulding at scrum-half while Danny Arnold keeps his place at full-back.

Castleford's centre, Richard Goddard, will have a late fitness test after suffering bruised ribs in the first half of Friday's 31-20 defeat at Warrington. Castleford, who have lost five of their last six matches, are still without the second-row. Brendon Tuuta, and the winger Simon Middleton because of knee injuries.

The hooker Richard Russell and the stand-off Frano Botica, who have not played this season, have resumed training and should be back in action soon.

They could start their comeback in an Alliance match at Hull on 28 December. Russell has had a knee operation and Botica broke a leg playing for Auckland Warriors in the summer.

In-form Sheffield - going for their seventh successive League victory - could have five players who missed Sunday's trip to London back against Halifax at the Don Valley. Paul Broadbent, Mark Aston, Bright Sodie, Anthony Farrell and Wade Savatava look set to return after injury. Halifax will be without their scrum-half Wayne Parker, who suffered a badly-hurled wrist in Sunday's 26-12 victory over Workington, and the full-back Mike Urmage, who has 10 stitches in a leg wound.

Sella set to stand down

Rugby Union

Philippe Sella, the veteran French centre who holds a world record 111 caps, is to retire from international rugby.

Sella, 33, whose international career spans more than 15 years, is one of the greatest centres in the history of the game. He earned his last cap on 22 June in Pretoria where France beat England 19-9 in the World Cup third-place play-off.

"It's time for me to concentrate on life outside rugby," said Sella, who runs a clothing business and created a company named Sella Communication which promotes sports events. Sella, a player who combines

great skill and power, scored 30 tries for France and was also one of the toughest defenders in the team. Despite offers from several leading clubs, he has always remained faithful to Agen in the south-western heartland of French rugby union. He will continue to play for Agen until the end of the season.

He said recently he intended to develop his company in England and might join an English club next season. "I haven't received proposals but I'm ready to study any offer," he said.

Saracens are believed to be competing for the services of Sella with Leicester. A Saracens official said: "Sella has already mentioned our name in the French press and we have had

discussions with him. If you want to improve your back division, then who better than one of the game's all-time greats?"

Sella enjoyed the best moments in his career in the 1987 World Cup in which France lost to New Zealand in the final after an epic win over Australia in the semi-finals. He often said his worst memory was a shock defeat by England in the quarter-finals of the 1991 World Cup.

Edinburgh Academicals will not appeal against the suspension of their coach, David Sole, until the end of the season. The former Scotland captain was banned by the Scottish Rugby Union for bringing the game into disrepute after criticising the referee, Colin Henderson.

Jones the boxer to try for net gains

Basketball

Budweiser League officials have said it is not a hoax. Roy Jones Jr, the International Boxing Federation super-middleweight champion, is ready to quit the sport to pursue a basketball career in England.

League and club officials said yesterday that Jones plans to retire after his defence on 12 January against Merqui Sosa and come to England for a trial with the London Towers.

"It's extremely serious," Rob Webb, the Budweiser League spokesman, said. "This is real. We've been in regular contact with his agent. It's very much the case that he'll call boxing a day

after his fight and will come and try out with the Towers. He'll have to prove himself. If he doesn't make it in London, he can try out with some other clubs."

Jones, considered the world's best pound-for-pound fighter, is reported to be a good basketball prospect, who has practised recently with the New York Knicks.

"He's really using us," Rich Dennis, the Towers spokesman, said. "The NBA is his objective. It would be his stepping stone to get some pro experience." Dennis said Jones is expected to arrive during the third week of January, though there is no

guarantee he will be good enough to join the club.

English teams can field two overseas players. The Towers, who lead the league by six points, already have two Americans, the guard Danny Lewis and the forward Tony Windless.

Dennis said Jones, who is 5ft 11in, would have to beat out Lewis for the guard position. "It's too early to judge whether he would make it or not," Dennis said. "He will have to be pretty outstanding prospect for the coach to change the team at this stage." Jones, who makes millions of dollars as a boxer, stands to take a huge pay cut if he plays basketball in England.

McEwen back for Britain

Ice hockey

Great Britain face the toughest test on their Olympic qualification trail so far when they meet Switzerland in Lausanne tonight. The match is the first of three successive away games for a British side hoping to compete alongside the world's elite in Nagano, Japan, in 1998.

Britain, who are boosted by the return of the Canadian-born Doug McEwen, travel to Slovenia and Denmark early in the New Year, though hopes suffered a blow last week when they dropped a vital home point after conceding a late goal to Denmark, having opened their campaign with a victory over the Netherlands.

McEwen returns after missing the 1-1 draw with the Danes through injury. The Cardiff Devils forward is one of five players from the Premier Division leaders in the squad, being joined by Ian and Stephen Cooper, Shannon Hope and Steve Morris.

Britain, however, face an immense task just to get to Japan. Winning this five-man pool will only mean qualification to an eight-strong pre-Olympic tournament in 1997 from which the top five will go through.

McEwen back for Britain

Ice hockey

Great Britain face the toughest test on their Olympic qualification trail so far when they meet Switzerland in Lausanne tonight. The match is the first of three successive away games for a British side hoping to compete alongside the world's elite in Nagano, Japan, in 1998.

Britain, who are boosted by the return of the Canadian-born Doug McEwen, travel to Slovenia and Denmark early in the New Year, though hopes suffered a blow last week when they dropped a vital home point after conceding a late goal to Denmark, having opened their campaign with a victory over the Netherlands.

McEwen returns after missing the 1-1 draw with the Danes through injury. The Cardiff Devils forward is one of five players from the Premier Division leaders in the squad, being joined by Ian and Stephen Cooper, Shannon Hope and Steve Morris.

Britain, however, face an immense task just to get to Japan. Winning this five-man pool will only mean qualification to an eight-strong pre-Olympic tournament in 1997 from which the top five will go through.

McEwen back for Britain

Ice hockey

Great Britain face the toughest test on their Olympic qualification trail so far when they meet Switzerland in Lausanne tonight. The match is the first of three successive away games for a British side hoping to compete alongside the world's elite in Nagano, Japan, in 1998.

Britain, who are boosted by the return of the Canadian-born Doug McEwen, travel to Slovenia and Denmark early in the New Year, though hopes suffered a blow last week when they dropped a vital home point after conceding a late goal to Denmark, having opened their campaign with a victory over the Netherlands.

McEwen returns after missing the 1-1 draw with the Danes through injury. The Cardiff Devils forward is one of five players from the Premier Division leaders in the squad, being joined by Ian and Stephen Cooper, Shannon Hope and Steve Morris.

Britain, however, face an immense task just to get to Japan. Winning this five-man pool will only mean qualification to an eight-strong pre-Olympic tournament in 1997 from which the top five will go through.

McEwen back for Britain

Ice hockey

Great Britain face the toughest test on their Olympic qualification trail so far when they meet Switzerland in Lausanne tonight. The match is the first of three successive away games for a British side hoping to compete alongside the world's elite in Nagano, Japan, in 1998.

Britain, who are boosted by the return of the Canadian-born Doug McEwen, travel to Slovenia and Denmark early in the New Year, though hopes suffered a blow last week when they dropped a vital home point after conceding a late goal to Denmark, having opened their campaign with a victory over the Netherlands.

McEwen returns after missing the 1-1 draw with the Danes through injury. The Cardiff Devils forward is one of five players from the Premier Division leaders in the squad, being joined by Ian and Stephen Cooper, Shannon Hope and Steve Morris.

Britain, however, face an immense task just to get to Japan. Winning this five-man pool will only mean qualification to an eight-strong pre-Olympic tournament in 1997 from which the top five will go through.

McEwen back for Britain

Ice hockey

Great Britain face the toughest test on their Olympic qualification trail so far when they meet Switzerland in Lausanne tonight. The match is the first of three successive away games for a British side hoping to compete alongside the world's elite in Nagano, Japan, in 1998.

Britain, who are boosted by the return of the Canadian-born Doug McEwen, travel to Slovenia and Denmark early in the New Year, though hopes suffered a blow last week when they dropped a vital home point after conceding a late goal to Denmark, having opened their campaign with a victory over the Netherlands.

McEwen returns after missing the 1-1 draw with the Danes through injury. The Cardiff Devils forward is one of five players from the Premier Division leaders in the squad, being joined by Ian and Stephen Cooper, Shannon Hope and Steve Morris.

Britain, however, face an immense task just to get to Japan. Winning this five-man pool will only mean qualification to an eight-strong pre-Olympic tournament in 1997 from which the top five will go through.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football

COCA-COLA CUP

FOURTH-ROUND REPLAYS

Birmingham v Middlesbrough (7.45)

Bolton v Norwich (7.45)

ENDSLEDGE INSURANCE LEAGUE

First Division

Southend v Port Vale (7.45)

Rugby League

STONES CENTENARY CHAMPIONSHIP: Cast-

leford v St Helens; Sheffield v Halifax; Warrington

v Bradford; Second Division: Castle v Don-

caster; 1st Division: RFL Cup

Rugby Union

OS INSURANCE COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

Southdown v First Division: Middlesbrough v

Basketball

7-UP TROPHY Semi-finals second leg: Birm-

ingham (6.25) v London (6.15); Sheffield

(6.15) v Wokingham (6.15)

Boxing

WORLD PROFESSIONAL BELLWETHERS

W. H. Bellwether v W. H. Bellwether

W. H. Bellwether v W. H. Bellwether

W. H. Bellwether v W. H. Bellwether

W. H. Bellwether v W. H. Bellwether

W. H. Bellwether v W. H. Bellwether

W. H. Bellwether v W. H. Bellwether

Cricket

Somerset's county cricket festival at Bath

is safe for the next three years after the

British-based Chemical Medical Investment

Group agreed a £200,000 sponsorship

deal and Bath City Council pledged to

match voluntary fund-raising pound for

pound.

Football

Vanuatu, one of 11 tournament spon-

sors, have landed exclusive sponsorship

of the 50-hour coverage of the European

Championship in England next

summer. The package includes open-

ing and closing credits, plus competi-

tions for viewers.

Ice hockey

NHL Montreal v Hartford 2; M. Rangers v

Washington 2; Vancouver 2; Colorado 2; Ed-

monton 3; Ottawa 1

Baseball

Pittsburgh 20 v 7 3 151 95 43

Montreal 16 v 12 3 98 95 34

Buffalo 13 v 14 3 98 95 31

Snooker

A proposal to pay board members of

the World Professional Billiards and

Snooker Association failed to gain the

necessary two-thirds majority at the an-

nuual meeting of the game's governing

body in Bristol yesterday. It was argued

that the WPBSA should concentrate on

putting a more extended executive struc-

ture in place rather than attempt to run

board business on a day-to-day basis.

Surfing

helly Slater, of the United States, out-

lasted Australia's Mark Occhipinti in

waves of up to eight feet (2.4 metres)

on Monday to claim his third world sur-

ing title in the Christie's Gerry Lopez

Pro Masters in Maui, Hawaii.

Television threatens tyranny

Murdoch demands veto rights on player transfers

Leading sports figures reacted with horror last night to the latest and most sinister example of the power and control exercised by television.

In a move which will give television unprecedented control over the way a sport is run, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation has asked rugby league players to sign contracts which will give his company power of veto over any transfers. The revelation comes just three months before the News Corporation funded Super League is due to be launched.

"It's Citizen Kane gone crazy," said Howard Wilkinson, manager of Leeds United and chairman of football's League Managers' Association. "Sport has to maintain its independence if it is to maintain its integrity."

The prospect of football being subject to similar constraints was equally unacceptable to Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association. "With the increasing power of television I could imagine there might be an attempt to foist it on us," he said. "But it would have to be over my dead body."

Although the arrival of BSkyB has brought millions of pounds into the game, concerns have been expressed over the degree to which television is dictating terms to football. And the implications of what the rugby league ruling might mean for football – the only other professional team sport with a comparable transfer system – are enormous.

Under the condition which rugby league has been asked to agree to, footballers would like-wise not be allowed to transfer from one club to another without the approval of the television company which owns the rights to the sport. So, for example, if television decided it was not in their best interests for Andy Cole to be transferred from Newcastle United to Manchester United, the move would be blocked.

"It doesn't even bear thinking about," Wilkinson said. "The media's impingement on sport, while nowadays seen as necessary, is still, at the end of the day, an impingement. The intrinsic virtue and nature of sport was always supposed to be that it stood outside what other people thought. It was to do with participants and participating – and those people deciding what was right and what was wrong not only for themselves but for future participants."

In general I would say the marriage between television and football has been a good one.

Simon O'Hagan gauges the horrified reaction from other sporting bodies

Football's got to stay, but provided it retains control of itself and its integrity.

Taylor believed that a rugby league style move in football would quickly run up against legal barriers. "No such deal could be done through the governing body of the sport without the consent of the players' organisation. And no organisation would be prepared to agree to it."

"I wouldn't be critical of BSkyB because the money's been excellent for the game, the quality of coverage has been very good, and with coverage restricted to satellite channels attendance has not been affected. But on the other hand television is a dangerous monster that can gobble up everything in front of it. It needs to be carefully controlled. Other-



It's Citizen Kane gone crazy. Sport has to maintain its independence if it is to maintain its integrity – Howard Wilkinson, manager of Leeds United and chairman of the League Managers' Association

wise the see-saw dips towards commercialism, the sport will decline and the sponsors will move in.

Television's latest move takes its influence over sport into a whole new dimension. In America, fans are used to American Football being played to suit the needs of television. It was the prospect of increased television advertising revenue that led to the idea that for last year's World Cup in the United States matches might consist of four quarters instead of two halves. As in Mexico in 1986, kick-times at USA 94 were geared to-

wards peak viewing times in Europe, so that players frequently had to endure the mid-day heat of Florida. Boring is so much in the control of television that bouts are now scheduled almost exclusively round what are the perceived wishes of viewers. That means Saturday night bouts and frequent delays in programmes while transmission time comes round.

The advent of BSkyB, which bought the rights to live coverage of the FA Premier League for £304m in 1992, has radically altered the traditional football calendar. It is a frequent grouse of fans used to full programmes of matches on Saturday afternoons that in the age of Sunday afternoon and Monday night matches they never know now when their team might be playing. BSkyB's £125m purchase of the Endersleigh League rights last month raised the prospect of matches in the First, Second and Third Divisions being played on Friday nights.

"It's going to be much more difficult if television begins to control the game," Taylor said. "We might as well cut out the middle men, ie the administrators. But what they must remember is that once spectators start to be alienated, the sponsors are not going to be interested."

The history of cricket in the last 20 years is dominated by television, the modern era effectively dating from the Packer revolution in the late 1970s when Kerry Packer's Channel 9 in Australia set up an international circuit that put players in pyjamas and gave the public a diet of one-day matches that has gone on unabated to this day.

David Graveney, the former Gloucestershire captain and now general secretary of the Cricketers' Association, welcomed the money television has brought into cricket, particularly in the boost it has given to the grassroots of the game. "It's now possible to see England Test series overseas ball-by-ball, which we never could before." His main concern in the wake of the rugby league Super League is that with it being scheduled for the summer, attendances at cricket might be affected.

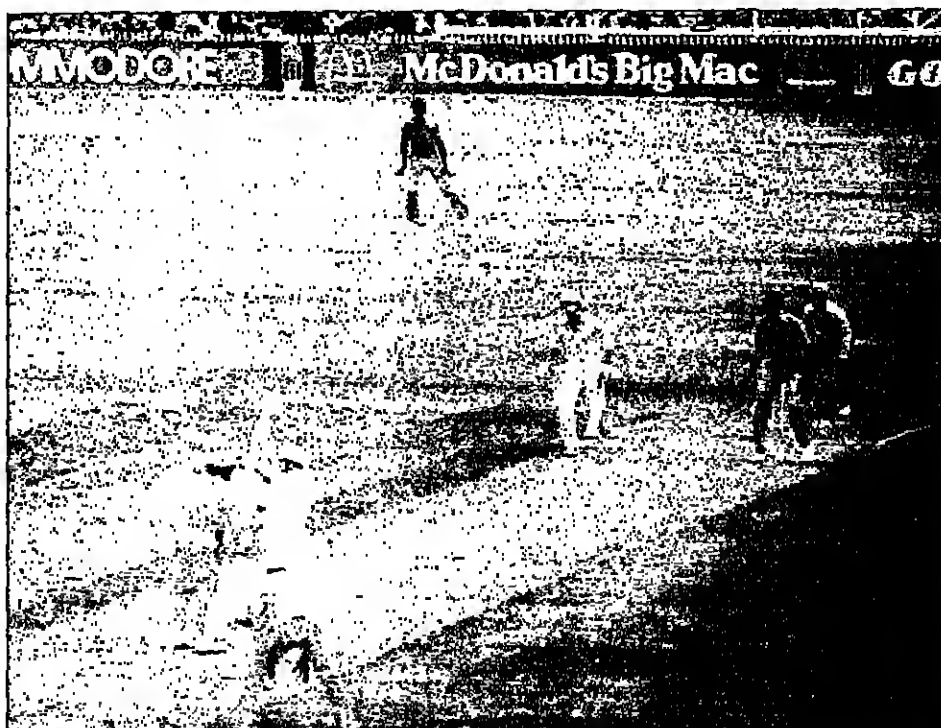
"It will be interesting to see what will happen in Yorkshire and Lancashire, where cricket membership is strong. I would be concerned at what we were led to believe were traditional winter sports being played in the summer. It would not be the sensible thing for everybody to be competing for the same space."



RUGBY LEAGUE A Castleford supporter shows her reaction to 'Murdochisation'



FOOTBALL Andy Townsend enjoys a TV-dictated noon kick-off at USA 94



CRICKET Packer's pyjama game: Australia v West Indies, Sydney 1979

Game falling into the hands of the lawyers

Dave Hadfield analyses the disturbing implications for rugby league's future

Rugby league knew, deep in its heart, that nothing could be quite the same again when it decided in April that Rupert Murdoch's £87m was irresistible.

Some immediate threats of revolution, like the forced mergers of clubs to form new Super League teams, were fought off by sheer weight of public hostility. But an apparently innocuous piece of paper which has come to light this week reveals that the game can hardly be regarded as the master of its own destiny.

Despite the size of the deal with Murdoch's News Corporation, the administrators of the game in Britain have repeatedly insisted that they will retain full autonomy over the way it is run.

It was, however, a fundamental element of the deal that the game here switched to a summer season and the pay-out from News Corporation was also conditional on Great Britain, from March onwards, only playing against Super League opposition at international level.

The new revelation, in a leaked Super League 'loyalty' contract that News Corporation has a finger in the transfer market, will heighten fears over the extent of control by a media organisation.

There are arguments for intervening in the sporting marketplace, in order to produce a more balanced competition. American professional sport achieves this through a draft system, with the weakest having first choice, and rugby league in Australia, even before the current upheaval, has tried various methods of levelling its playing fields – drafts, salary caps and residential qualifications.

British rugby league has always operated a largely untrammelled transfer system, but, dominated as it is to an unhealthy extent by Wigan, it presents a particularly tempting case for treatment.

For a controlling media interest to have the final word on who plays where, however, is a whole new ball-game as far as rugby league and British sport are concerned. Equally disturbing is the way that this provision has never been publicly admitted and evidence of it exists only on a confidential document.

There are other sections of the agreement, signed in return for payments as high as £100,000, that should cause concern. Players, both here and in Australia, where a bidding war between Super League and the ARL has produced even juicier incentives, do not seem to have spent much time studying the small print.

"Christmas comes but once a career," is the way that a cartoonist on one Australian paper

has captured the general mood among these players on both sides of the world.

Many players in Britain will be terrified to discover that another club could want to sign them; their present club could be willing to let them go, they could want to move – but News Corporation's lawyers can say no.

Another clause in the contract commits players here to 'co-operate' with News and with its group companies in giving interviews and making public appearances in relation to the promotion of Super League.

That appears to grant special access to Sky television – which has exclusive rights to screen Super League games – and to Murdoch's British papers, *The Times*, *Sunday Times*, *Sun* and *News of the World*, plus any official Super League publications that News decides to launch.

There is a notable absence of any requirement to co-operate with other newspapers or the BBC, whose continued coverage of the game, through the Regal Trophy and Silk Cut Challenge Cup, is under negotiation at the moment.

Ironically, it is my information that Sky have had difficulties enforcing this clause, because some players, no doubt emboldened by the cash swirling around in the game, have expected to be paid for interviews.

Also in the contract is the threat of an injunction, should a player infringe any of its clauses, and the instruction that "You shall keep the provisions of this Agreement confidential and not disclosed except as required by law."

One player, who must remain anonymous, has felt sufficiently concerned about the implications of the whole document to break that clause.

Rugby league must now ponder whether it can live with those implications; whether they are a price in forfeited independence worth paying for a huge investment in the game.

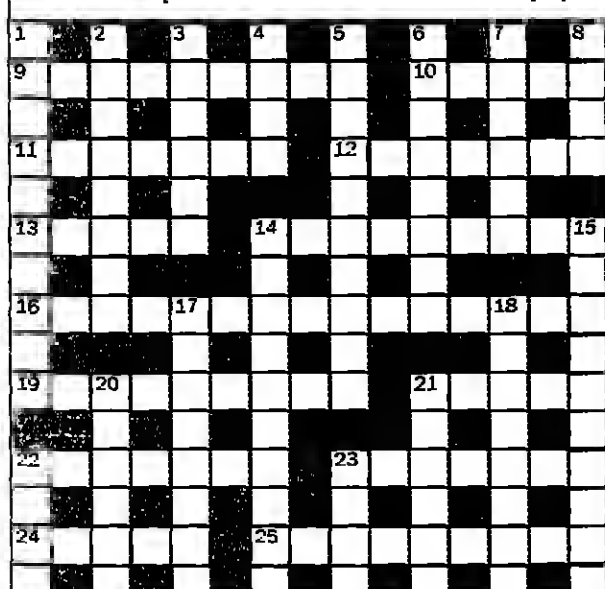
The new Super League International Board, holding its inaugural meeting in Sydney, has decided to adopt the four rule changes, affecting the play-the-ball, kick-off and scrums, currently being trialed in Britain. The new rules will operate in the Super League competitions in both Australia and Europe, starting in March.

The Rochdale Hornets' forward Tony Hilton has been banned for three months after testing positive for the banned substance, ephedrine. The Rugby League's spokesman, Paul Harrison, said that ephedrine was present in cold remedies that could be bought freely over the counter, but that the League was determined to stamp out any form of drug use.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 2862, Wednesday 20 December

By Aquila



Tuesday's Solution
 1. DEPT. TALK NEWBORN
 2. I E M N A I E U
 3. THREE IMPROVISED
 4. A S E F P U E L
 5. PROBABLY RENCE
 6. A N E O A
 7. TANGO DISK WATER
 8. E B G P E R
 9. BELIEVE HERE REACH
 10. OASTS MACHINISTS
 11. T C A I H N T D
 12. HOOKNOSED CHINO
 13. E L C E A U O G
 14. REIDDER YFRONTIS

- ACROSS**
- Unpleasant drive (9)
 - Routine task for some Echo reporters (5)
 - Cheerleaders followed by piper, turned out smartly dressed (7)
 - Bow-tie knotted by Rat-t? (7)
 - Coming before a superior (5)
 - Finished outside cigars (9)
 - See him changing cape, boots in cell? – (6-9)
 - check with division for support (9)
 - Cold oil-spread, with celery starter, gives one bellyache (5)
 - Cushions for bumbling old fellows (7)

- DOWN**
- Style on *The Independent*, a means of making sparks fly (10)
 - Licensed agent (8)
 - Shot shore-bird right on the bottom (6)
 - Jelly ripe for devolution (14)
 - Emulsion paint put on new church in moderation (10)
 - Misfortune I had when engulfed by stress (8)

- 7** Catbird, say, a cheeky creature in the garden (6)
- 8** Permit brides to be cut short (14)
- 14** Telling of likeable rogue with grudge about troubles (10)
- 15** Mum with no address? (10)
- 17** This stimulant could be fine in small restaurant (8)
- 18** Note, every bit of space is needed for such dancing (8)
- 20** Working for business partnership that is not stable (6)
- 23** Frank Shaw's play cut (6)
- 22** Bishop has run amok in party (4)
- 23** Difficult medium (4)

Foreigner rule 'illegal'

Football

Uefa were yesterday warned that their European competitions will be deemed illegal unless the controversial three-foreigner rule is scrapped immediately.

European football's governing body was told by the European Union's executive commission that the stipulation which limits clubs to three foreign players plus two "assimilated" foreigners – those who have been playing in the country for five years or played there since youth-team level – has been made redundant.

The new rule means that national associations in the 15-member EU who maintain the rule in their domestic competitions will also be flouting European law. Padraig Flynn, the EU social affairs commissioner, said: "From now on, nationality restrictions are illegal in European-level club competitions. I expect those affected to take the necessary steps to change their rules."

The commission has become embroiled in the arguments which have raged since the European Court backed Belgian player Jean-Marc Bosman's long legal battle. Uefa have said that they will ignore the court

ruling in the Champions' League, Cup-Winners' Cup and Uefa Cup competitions and insist they will not change the rules of the 49-member federation because of a court decision in the 15-nation European Union.

The Premier League yesterday confirmed they had also advised member clubs to continue applying the three-foreigners rule in domestic competitions until further notice. Spokesman Mike Lee said: "Our view at the moment is that the current rule still applies and we expect our clubs to abide by them."

However, Flynn warned that the rule must be scrapped immediately so teams can play as many EU nationals as they want in any club match in the EU.

Struggling Bolton Wanderers have the chance to field four foreigners tonight against Norwich in the Coca-Cola Cup, while Manchester City are thinking of fielding their new signing, Ronnie Ekstrand, to make up a quartet of foreign players against Chelsea on Saturday.

Alan Ball hopes that the Dane, signed from Barcelona, could join up with Germans like Immanuel and Uwe Rösler along with Georgia's Georgi Kinkadze.

Both the Premier League and Football League, who run the Coca-Cola Cup, have asked them to stick by the old rules, but privately both organisations admit they could do little to enforce it.

Adrian Cook, a Premier League spokesman, has sent a letter to the clubs asking them to stand by the present rule book. "I suspect the rules may stay in place for the remainder of the season, rather than changing the goalposts halfway through," Cook said. "We are asking the clubs to go along with the rules as they stand, although we can't force them."

Cook revealed there would be discussions behind the scenes before the weekend, but Bolton will be the first to test the water tonight.

Wanderers have an injury crisis, and want to call up the Dutchman, Richard Sneekes. They already have Serbia's Sasa Curcic, Iceland's Gudni Bergsson and the Dutchman Fabian de Freitas in their team, which has kept Sneekes out in the cold under the old rule. Now he could come into the side and Bolton may escape punishment.

Portugal's Artur Jorge has been named as the new manager of Switzerland from 1 January 1996, displacing the English coach Roy Hodgson, who also manages Internazionale.

More football, page 23.

EAU DE ROCHAS

POUR HOMME

